

K THE  
Protestant-Dissenter's  
C A T E C H I S M.

CONTAINING,

I. A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE NON-  
CONFORMISTS :

II. THE REASONS OF THE DISSENT  
FROM THE NATIONAL CHURCH.

DESIGNED

To instruct and establish YOUNG PERSONS  
among the DISSENTERS in the PRIN-  
CIPLES of NONCONFORMITY.

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THE TENTH EDITION.

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*Take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou  
forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest  
they depart from thine heart all the days of thy life :  
but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons.*

DEUT. iv. 9.

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# P R E F A C E

TO THIS

## EDIT I O N.

WHEN this Work first appeared, which was in the year 1775, it was accompanied with a Preface of some length, to shew the occasion there was for an undertaking of this nature, on account of the ignorance apparent in many Dissenters with respect to the principles of Non-conformity, and their indifference to them; in consequence of which great numbers easily yield to the various temptations to relinquish their profession, and join the established church. It was there also attempted to evince the great *importance* of those principles on which the Protestant dissent is founded, as they are in fact the same with those on which the separation from the Church of Rome is built; as likewise to represent of how much moment it is to maintain the Dissenting interest in this kingdom, since it has a considerable influence in preserving the cause of truth, of li-

berty, and of practical religion, as some moderate Churchmen\* themselves have acknowledged.

The great encouragement this Work has met with, affords such evidence of a general apprehension of the importance of the design, as seems to render that Preface now superfluous. As, however, some objections have been made to the Work itself, and some reflections cast upon the Author, not only by the High-church party, but by some moderate pious and evangelical Church-men, whom he highly esteems; and even some Dissenters themselves, have on the same ground expressed their disapprobation, it may not be amiss to retain the following defence, which was first printed as a P. S. to the Eighth Edition.

The Author finds that he is charged by some with great uncharitableness. It was hoped that what was said in the PREFACE, and at the close, under the last inference, would have precluded such an

\* "If (says Dr. EDWARDS) we would but open our eyes, we should see that we are beholden to the *Dissenters* for the continuance of a great part of our theological principles; for if the *High-churchmen* had no checks, they would have brought in *Popery* before this time, by their over-valuing pomp and ceremony in divine worship. So that if there had been no Dissenters, the Church of England had been long since ruined." EDWARDS'S *Preacher*, Vol. II. p. 183.

accusation ;

accusation; with all impartial and judicious persons he trusts it will.—It has been argued,—“the difference between Conformists and Dissenters is comparatively of trifling importance, and that such a work as this tends to widen the breach which good men would rather wish to heal.” I answer, the controversy is not with *Men* but *Things*, and some of them things which the wisest and best in the church will not defend, but have not power to alter. Besides, the difference is the same whether it be pointed out or not. If there were no difference that is material, then we have no just reasons for our dissent, and we ought to conform; for Nonconformity if not a GOOD cause is a very BAD one. If we have such reasons, where is the uncharitableness of producing them? If they are not solid, we wish to have them confuted. Worldly emolument, popularity, and a larger sphere of usefulness, we feel to be strong arguments in favour of Conformity, to which nothing but conscience would prevent our yielding. Some things which we object to are, indeed, in themselves “trifles.” We, however, are not the persons who magnify their importance, but they that make them essential to communion. Others, we think of great moment, and consider ourselves as bound to oppose with zeal; which however we think we may do consistently with the most enlarged charity to the persons of those

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who

who are differently minded. But were the matters in debate of *far less* moment than they are, since an entire "assent and consent, to all and every thing" is the condition of ministerial conformity, our objections would remain in full force, so long as those Canons remain in the Bible,—*Whatsoever is not of faith is sin*: and *He that doubteth is condemned if he eat*: for a conscientious man can no more declare a falsehood about the smallest trifle, than he could about things of the highest moment.

Dr. STURGES in his *Letters to the Bishop of London*, (in which he has animadverted on a few passages in this Catechism) has advanced some plausible things in favour of Conformity. But the force of his reasoning is by no means equal to his politeness and candour. Those who wish to see a solid answer to it are referred to the *Letters* of Mr. JOSHUA TOULMIN, addressed to the Author. Price 1s.

Since the eighth edition of this Work, I have received a long anonymous Letter, containing various, and some very severe animadversions upon it. If the writer should think fit to *publish* his Letter, he shall have a proper answer.

Dr. HORSLEY, Bishop of *St. David's*, (now of *Rocheſter*) in his *Review of the Dissenter's Case*,  
is



is pleased to notice this Catechism, and to say, that it inculcates "no one principle of the christian religion, or of any religion under the sun," and to insinuate that it is calculated to instil into the minds of our youth a spirit of sedition and rebellion. His Lordship adds, "it is cheap in price, but rich in matter, and whoever would have a clear idea of the word *Loyalty* as used by the Nonconformists, should never lay it out of his hands till he has gotten it by heart." An answer to this part of his Lordship's Work may be seen in the Author's *Vindication of the modern Dissenters*. It is sufficient for his confutation here, to refer the Reader to the Work itself, now before him, which, so far from containing any thing like sedition or rebellion, strongly inculcates (among other principles of the christian religion) PEACEABLENESS, CHARITY, LOYALTY to the KING, SUBJECTION to Governors, and OBEDIENCE to the LAWS. See particularly *Part II. Q. 2. 15. 125. A. 5, 6.* Who could have supposed that the Rev. Prelate had read this Catechism when he gave the above description of it?

*Published*



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THE  
PROTESTANT-DISSENTER'S  
CATECHISM.

PART THE FIRST.

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A BRIEF  
HISTORY of the NONCONFORMISTS.

Q. 1. *HOW* many Religions are there in the world?

A. Four; the Pagan (or Heathen), the Jewish, the Mahometan, and the Christian.

Besides these, multitudes in all parts of Europe are *Deists*, who have not, as such, any form of Religion or public worship. They profess to believe in God, and many of them in a future state, as the dictates of reason, but deny all revelation.

Q. 2. *Who* are generally comprehended under the name of Christians?

A. All who profess to receive the religion of Jesus Christ as divine.

Q. 3. *What* is the grand division which has taken place among Christians?

A. Christians

*A. Christians (in this Western part of Europe) are divided into Papists and Protestants.*

In the *Eastern* part there is a *Third* denomination, viz. those of the *Greek Church*, which in many respects, particularly in its ceremonies, resembles that of *Rome*.

*Q. 4. Who are called Papists?*

*A. Those who are in communion with the church of Rome, often called Roman-Catholics, but more properly Papists, because of their subjection to the Pope\*, whom the greater part of them receive and honour as Christ's vicar, and universal bishop.*

\* In Latin *Papa*, a name at first given to all bishops, but afterwards appropriated to the bishop of *Rome*, when he usurped the office of universal bishop.

*Q. 5. Who are meant by the term Protestants?*

*A. This name was given to those who first publicly protested against the errors of Popery; viz. at Spire in Germany, 1529; and from them it has been, to this day, applied to those Christians in general (in the West) who are not Papists.*

*Q. 6. Are the Protestants in England united in their faith and manner of worship?*

*A. No; they are divided into Conformists and Nonconformists; or, as they are commonly called, Church-men and Dissenters.*

*Q. 7. Who are called Conformists, or Church-men?*

*A. Those who conform to that mode of worship, and form of church-government, which are established and supported in England by the state.*

*Q. 8. Who are intended by the term Dissenters?*

*A. Those Protestants in general who do not conform to the established church, but meet for divine*

divine worship in places of their own: more especially those of the three following denominations, *Presbyterians, Independents, and \* Baptists.*

\* So commonly called, for brevity sake, but more justly *Anti-pædo-baptists*.—Another considerable body of Dissenters, (tho' not generally included in that term) are distinguished by the name of *Quakers*, who first appeared about the year 1650.

Q. 9. *How long have there been Dissenters in England?*

A. In the proper sense of the word, there were Dissenters in England long before the Reformation took place here.

Q. 10. *What do you mean by the Reformation?*

A. The renouncing of Popery, which for many ages was the established religion of this country, and of almost all Europe.

Q. 11. *What were they called who dissented from the church of England, before she renounced Popery?*

A. *Lollards*, (a term of reproach equivalent to that of *Fanatics* †) and *Wickliffites*, on account of their embracing the doctrines of *Wickliffe* ‡, who  
was

† See a full inquiry into the etymology of it in *Mac-tane's Transl. of Mosheim's Eccl. Hist.* vol. 1. p. 744.

‡ He was born at *Wickliffe* near *Richmond* in *Yorkshire*, about 1324, and studied at *Queen's* (afterwards at *Merton*) college, *Oxford*, where he was some time *Divinity-Professor*. He maintained most of those points by which the *Puritans* were afterwards distinguished. He wrote several tracts against the principal doctrines of Popery, and was the first who translated the whole || Bible into English. Such was his courage and zeal, that he sent a confession of his faith to the Pope, and declared himself willing to de-

|| *Gilpin's Lives*, p. 36—38.



was the first person, of any eminence, in England, who exposed the doctrines of Popery.

*Q. 12. When was the Reformation in England publickly begun?*

*A.* In the Reign of King *Henry VIII.* 1538, when he quarrelled with the Pope, and denied his supremacy in the church of England, on account of his refusing to authorize the divorce of the Queen.

*Q. 13. Was the church so reformed in this reign as to satisfy all persons of Protestant-principles?*

*A.* No; for notwithstanding *Henry's* quarrel with the Pope, he passed an act for establishing some of the grossest errors of Popery, which made it death to write or speak against them; in consequence of which several Protestants were burnt.

*Q. 14. How did the Reformation proceed in the next reign?*

*A.* *Edward VI.* who succeeded *Henry*, was an excellent and pious prince, and tho' he was very young, the Reformation was greatly promoted by him. Archbishop *Cranmer* was eminently instrumental herein, particularly in correcting and reprinting the English Bible, and causing it to be read in the churches.

*Q. 15. Was any thing retained in the church, in this reign, to which any persons refused to conform?*

*A.* Yes; many popish ceremonies and habits, which many persons, and some Bishops, declared against and scrupled to use, particularly Bishop

send it at *Rome*. He was many years minister at *Lutterworth* in *Leicestershire*, where, notwithstanding the danger to which his zeal exposed him, he quietly ended his days, A. D. 1384.

*Hooper,*



*Hooper*, who, refusing to be consecrated in the popish habits, was imprisoned and his life endangered.

Q. 16. *How long did Edward reign?*

A. He died in the seventh year of his reign, (which was the 16th of his age) and was succeeded by *Queen Mary*, in the year 1553.

Q. 17. *Did she do any thing towards perfecting the Reformation.*

A. No; but much to hinder it; and in a great measure undid what had been done in the preceding reigns, by restoring popish doctrines, ceremonies, and worship.

Q. 18. *What was the state of things among those that dissented from the church in her reign?*

A. The number of them was much increased; but they were refused liberty of conscience, and persecuted with great severity. Great numbers fled beyond the seas, particularly into *Germany*; where the Reformation flourished. Many of those who remained at home were burnt\*, among whom were several Bishops. On this account she was called, "The bloody *Queen Mary*."

\* Archbishop *Cranmer*, Bishops *Latimer*, *Ridley*, *Farrar*, *Hooper*: Dr. *Taylor*, Messrs. *Rogers*, *Bradford*, *Philpot*, &c. The whole number burnt in this reign was (as *Burnet* moderately reckons them) 284. But *Grindal*, who lived at the same time, says they were 800. Besides these 60 died in prisons. *Burnet's Hist. Ref. Book iii. A. D. 1558.*

Q. 19. *What Bishops were the most active in executing Mary's bloody edicts?*

A. *Gardiner* Bishop of *Winchester*, and *Bonner* Bishop of *London*; who delighted in seeing the most horrid cruelties practised, and the latter of whom, in many instances, executed them himself.

Q. 20. *Who succeeded Queen Mary?*

A. Her Sister Queen *Elizabeth*, in the year 1558. Who, tho' she was, on the whole, inclined to carry on the Reformation, was too much afraid of offending the Papists, was herself very fond of popish pageantry, ceremonies, habits, and church-ornaments; and extremely ambitious of supporting and extending her authority in church affairs.

Q. 21. *What relief did the Protestants find in her reign?*

A. Tho' they had high expectations from her, so that those of them who had transported themselves abroad, in *Mary's* reign, returned home when she came to the crown, they found the terms of conformity so narrow, that many could not in conscience comply with them.

Particularly the famous *Coverdale*, and *Fox* the martyr-ologist, who had such enlarged views of religious liberty, that he refused subscribing any thing but the BIBLE. There were at this time 8,000 parishes without preaching ministers.

Q. 22. *What distinction took place in this reign among the Protestants?*

A. Some of them were called by their enemies *Puritans*, as a term of reproach, on account of their attempting a purer form of worship and discipline than had yet been established. Whereas the rest were satisfied with the common-prayer-book as it was altered in the time of King *Edward VI.*

The foundation of this difference was laid during their state of exile at *Frankfort*, in the former reign, where some of them were for confining themselves to the use of the forms, as they had been established at home, and others were for improving their liberty to the utmost, in reforming whatever they thought exceptionable in them.

Q. 23.

Q. 23. *What methods did the Puritans use to accomplish their ends?*

A. Finding no prospect of a further reformation from the legislature, some of the leading persons among them resolved to attempt it in a more private way. For this purpose they erected a presbytery at *Wandsworth*\*, Nov. 20, 1572, taking care to keep their proceedings as secret as possible. This was the first Presbyterian-church in *England*.

\* A village about six miles from *London*, on the banks of the *Thames*.

Q. 24. *Did all those who were called Puritans separate from the established church?*

A. No; there were some who complied with the terms of conformity, rigid as they were, in hope of the removal of their grievances, at least by the Queen's successor.

Q. 25. *How were the-Puritan party treated in Queen Elizabeth's reign?*

A. They were treated with great severity: particularly the *Brownists*†, for opposing the Hierarchy, partly thro' the Queen's desire to please the Papists, and partly thro' the imposing and cruel disposition of some of the Bishops‡.—An act was passed which subjected those that did not

† The followers of one *Robert Brown*, who was educated in *C. C. C. Cambridge*, and was a preacher in the diocese of *Norwich*. He wrote very vehemently, and went about the country preaching, against the discipline and ceremonies of the church. His principles were in the main the same with those who were afterwards called *Independents*, excepting that he was more uncharitable towards persons of different sentiments.

‡ Archbishops *Parker*, *Whitgift*, *Bancroft*, Bishop *Aylmer*, &c.

conform to the ceremonies of the church to banishment, and in case of refusal or return, to death.—In this reign the *High-commission-court* was instituted, which might truly be called the English Inquisition.—The court of *Star-chamber*, also, constantly sat in this reign, and was to the last degree severe in its censures and punishments.

*Q. 26. What was the effect of these hardships which the Puritans suffered?*

*A.* They served to increase their number, and determined them to separate from the established church.

*Q. 27. Was the church any further reformed by James I?*

*A.* No; though he had been bred a Presbyterian in *Scotland*, and tho' a petition for a further reformation was presented, signed by a thousand ministers, the terms of conformity were rendered harder than ever by the book of Canons established by parliament, (A. D. 1603) which remain to this day.

*Q. 28. What proclamation did James issue out which gave the Puritans, and other good men, remarkable disgust?*

*A.* One for the encouragement of diversions on the Lord's-day, commonly called, The Book of Sports.

*Q. 29. How were the Puritans treated in James's reign?*

*A.* Both those that were out of the church, and those that were in it, were persecuted by the Bishops with great violence. Several hundreds of the most conscientious ministers were silenced, imprisoned, and excommunicated; and many of them fled from this persecution into *Holland*, and afterwards into the wilds of *America*.

The



The first who settled in *Holland*, were the followers of one Mr. *Robinson*, who is considered as the father of the *Independents*. He fled thither in the last reign, with other *Brownists*, and founded a church at *Leyden* on the Congregational plan. Mr. *Henry Jacobs* there imbibed his sentiments on church-government, and when he returned to *England*, founded the first *Independent church*, in the year 1616.

Q. 30. *What success had they in this hazardous adventure?*

A. Though they met with great difficulties at first, yet their numbers increasng, by reason of persecution at home, they laid the foundation of a noble settlement, which proved an asylum for oppressed Nonconformists, and is now become a distinct and most flourishing empire.

Q. 31. *Did the Puritans meet with any favour from Charles I?\**

A. No; but on the contrary they were persecuted by him, while Papists were encouraged, thro' the influence of his Queen (who was a bigotted Papist) and several of the Bishops, particularly Archbishop *Laud*, who was strongly attached to popish † ceremonies.—In this reign the *English* Liturgy and Episcopal government were introduced in *Scotland*.

\* He came to the crown, A. D. 1625.

† See the curious account of his consecrating *Katharine Cree-Church*, in *Neal's Hist.* or *Bennet's Mem.* He made some alterations in the Liturgy in favour of Popery; licensed popish books; and suppressed Protestant ones, viz. Bishop *Jewel's* works, and *Fox's Martyrology*.

Q. 32. *What was the religious character of this prince?*

A. Much as his virtues have been extolled by his friends, it is certain he was notorious for his

disimulation: and he encouraged profaneness, by suppressing afternoon sermons, and republishing the book of Sports, which he enjoined all the Clergy to read in their churches; for refusing which, many were turned out of their livings, and excommunicated.

*Q. 33. Has he not been charged with aiming at arbitrary Government?*

*A.* Yes, and justly; for he, in various instances, violated the fundamental privileges of parliament, and exercised an illegal power in civil and ecclesiastical affairs.

*Q. 34. What was the consequence of his arbitrary proceedings?*

*A.* They occasioned a civil war among his subjects, a great part of whom joined his parliament in defending their civil and religious liberties, against those that adhered to the King in attempting to enslave the nation.

*Q. 35. How did the civil war end?*

*A.* The parliament proved victorious, and made the King their prisoner. At length, the charge of high treason being exhibited against him, he was condemned by the house of commons (then reduced to a small number, and acting under the influence of the army) to lose his head; which death he suffered *Jan. 30, 1649.*

*Q. 36. Are not the Presbyterians justly charged with the murder of the King?*

*A.* His death is very unjustly charged upon any religious party as such, especially the *Presbyterians*, since it is well known there was but one of them in the house of commons when the civil war begun, and that *fifty-seven* of their ministers in *London*, and many in the country, (as well as some *Independents*) remonstrated  
against

against the design of the army to take away his life.

Any impartial person will be convinced how unjustly the Dissenters are so commonly reflected upon as *Regicides*, (especially in 30th of *January* Sermons) who will see in what manner their own historian, Mr. *Neal*, speaks of this affair, vol. ii. p. 360.

Q. 37. *What was most remarkable after the death of Charles?*

A. The constitution was dissolved, and the monarchy changed into a commonwealth: Presbyterianism took place of Episcopacy in the church of *England*, and the penal laws against Dissenters were abolished.

Q. 38. *When the Presbyterians got into power, were not they as great enemies to liberty of conscience as the Episcopalians had been?*

A. It cannot be denied that they were zealous to establish the divine right of Presbytery, too severe upon the episcopal clergy\*, and enemies to the toleration of all other parties of Christians, particularly the *Baptists*, who about this time began to flourish in *England*†.

\* Dr. Walker's attempt to recover an account of the sufferings of the clergy, contains, however, many false assertions and virulent reflections on this head, which the reader will find satisfactorily and candidly answered in *Neal's Hist. Purit.* vol. ii. p. 17, &c.

† The first Baptist-church in *London* is said to have been founded in the year 1640, of which one Mr. *Jesse* was chosen pastor.

Q. 39. *Does not this prove that the zeal of Dissenters for liberty is only for their own, and that they have no objection to arbitrary power when they can get it into their own hands?*

A. No, by no means; for at that time the principles of liberty were not thoroughly understood by any denomination of Christians. The  
present

present body of Dissenters as severely condemn the Intolerance of the Presbyterians in *Charles's* time, as of the High-flying Churchmen. They are now friends to universal liberty in religion, and no denomination among them wishes to have its own way of worship established as the national religion.

Q. 40. *How long did the Commonwealth continue?*

A. Little more than four years; when *Oliver Cromwell*, who was General of the army, dissolved the parliament, and called a new one; which, very soon resigning the government, *Oliver* took it into his own hands, and was installed *Lord Protector*, Dec. 16, 1653.

Q. 41. *What was the state of Religion under Oliver's Protectorship?*

A. His principles were favourable to religious liberty, and he declared for a general Toleration of Protestants. Though he allowed the *Presbyterian* form of church-government, he disarmed it of its coercive power, greatly encouraged the *Independents*, and protected other parties. And though, for certain political reasons, he unjustly refused a legal Toleration to the *Episcopalians*, their assemblies were connived at, and several of their ministers allowed the exercise of their office, without the fetters of oaths or subscriptions.

✚ In the articles relating to Religion in the year 1653, the Christian Religion, as contained in the *Scriptures*, was held forth and recommended as the public profession of these nations. *Neal's Hist.* vol. ii. p. 427. And when the assembly were for limiting the toleration to those that believed the *fundamentals*, (which they appointed a committee to draw up) *Oliver* declared against them; saying, "All men should be left to the liberty of their own consciences, and that the Magistrate could not interfere without ensnaring himself in the guilt of persecution." *Ib.* 446.

Q. 42.



Q. 42. *Who succeeded Oliver in the government of these kingdoms?*

A. His son *Richard*; but he resigned the Protectorship in eight months, and returned to a private life. After an interval of great confusion, *Charles II.* the son of *Charles I.* (having been several years in exile) was restored, chiefly through the influence of the *Presbyterians*, who had all along opposed *Cromwell's* arbitrary measures, and were friends to the *English* limited monarchy, as the Dissenters in general still are.

Some late reflections upon them, as having changed their political principles, are false and scandalous, adapted and designed to render them odious to government.

Q. 43. *What was the character of this Prince?*

A. He was remarkably addicted to pleasure and lewdness, and his restoration was attended with a deluge of wickedness and debauchery, which spread itself from the court through the kingdom, and corrupted the manners of the Clergy.

Q. 44. *How did Charles requite the Presbyterians for their zeal in his cause?*

A. Tho' he made them fair promises, and appointed ten of them his chaplains in ordinary, he quickly restored the Liturgy, and reinstated the old sequestered clergy, (even those ejected for immoralities) by which means some hundreds of the Presbyterian clergy were dispossessed at once. And tho' the King flattered them with the hope of a comprehension with the Episcopalians, and they held a conference at the *Savoy* with that view, they soon found themselves deceived. The Bishops would make no alterations in the liturgy in their favour, but there was evidently a contrivance to keep them out of the church; in which all things were soon restored to the old standard; Men of high church principles were preferred

preferred to bishoprics, the terms of conformity were rendered harder than ever, and those that refused to comply with them were treated with rigour.

Q. 45. *What was the first act of parliament in this reign injurious to the Dissenters?*

A. The *Corporation-act*, which incapacitated any person from bearing office in any Corporation, who had not received the Sacrament of the Lord's-supper, according to the rites of the Church of *England*, within a year before his election; as well as taken the oaths of allegiance and supremacy.

Q. 46. *Which was the most remarkable act in Charles II's reign relating to religion?*

A. An act which took place on *Bartholomew-day* 1662, called the *Act of Uniformity*; which required all ministers, who would continue in the church, or be admitted to livings, to use the same form of worship, to subscribe the Thirty-nine articles, and declare their assent and consent to a new edition of the common prayer-book, before many of them could have an opportunity of seeing it.

Q. 47. *What was the effect of this act?*

A. It obliged above *two thousand* worthy conscientious ministers (many of whom had had *episcopal* ordination) to leave the established church, and take their lot among the Dissenters, who hereby received so large an addition, that they may be considered as the fathers of the Dissenting interest.—The name of *Puritans* was now changed to that of *Nonconformists*.

Q. 48. *Were these ministers to be commended who thus threw themselves out of their livings?*

A. It was doubtless a glorious stand which they made in favour of christian liberty, which did

did great honour to the protestant faith, and tended more than a thousand other arguments, to convince a licentious atheistical age of the reality of religion, and the regard that is due to the rights of conscience; for nothing but conscience could be supposed to influence them in thus sacrificing their worldly interest, which many of them did without any visible means of subsistence.

Q. 49. *Had they liberty to worship God according to their consciences after they left the church?*

A. No; they petitioned for a Toleration three days after the Act of Uniformity took place, but in vain\*; and soon after (A. D. 1664) the *Conventicle-act* passed, by which any person above sixteen years of age, present at any meeting for any religious exercise, not according to the church of *England*, where there were five or more persons besides the household, was for the first offence to suffer three months imprisonment. or pay 5*l.*—for the second, six months, or 10*l.*—and for the third to be banished for seven years, or pay 100*l.*—and in case of return or escape, to suffer death without benefit of clergy.

\* Lord *Clarendon*, and Archbishop *Sheldon*, opposed their being tolerated with peculiar warmth, and prevailed with the council.

Q. 50. *Was any other act passed to harass the Nonconformists?*

A. Yes; the year following (1665), the *Oxford-act*, or *Five-mile act* passed, which restrained all dissenting ministers (on the penalty of 40*l.*) who would not take a most unreasonable oath†, therein

† The oath was this: "I A. B. do swear that it is  
" not lawful upon any pretence whatsoever to take arms  
" against

therein specified, from coming within five miles of any city, town-corporate, or borough, or any place where they had exercised their ministry; and from teaching any school.

“ against the King, or against those commissioned by him ;  
 “ and that I will not at any time endeavour any alteration  
 “ of government either in church or state.”

*N. B.* This act was passed at a time when the *plague* reigned in *London* to such a degree as to carry off 8 or 10,000 in a week ; which occasioned most of the established clergy to desert their parishes, tho’ the people had then most need of their help, and were best disposed to receive it. Some of the ejected ministers, moved with compassion for the souls of men, in this deplorable situation, had ventured to preach in these deserted pulpits, but this gave umbrage to those in power, and was a motive to the passing this scandalous act.

*Q. 51. What was the disposition of the Bishops towards the Dissenters in this reign?*

*A.* They were for the most part very diligent in persecuting them, and greatly encouraged informers ; particularly Archbishop *Sheldon*, who sent orders to all the Bishops of his province to return the names of all ejected Nonconformist ministers, with their places of abode and manner of life, with a view to enforce the laws more strictly against them.

*Q. 52. Did not the king discover an inclination to grant a Toleration?*

*A.* Yes ; after the banishment of Lord *Clarendon* (who was one of the bitterest enemies the Dissenters had) the King moved, in his speech to the parliament, for a general Toleration, and a project was entertained for a comprehension ; but the Bishops opposed these motions, and the parliament petitioned for the execution of the penal laws, so that the persecution



tion was renewed, and the Conventicle-act (which had expired), was revived, with two extraordinary clauses added to it, which empowered any justices, constables, &c. to break open any place where they should be informed of a conventicle, and inflicted a penalty of 5*l.* on any justice that refused to execute this act.

Q. 53. *What was the design and the effect of the Test-act which passed in this reign?*

A. The Test-act requires all persons, taking any office under the government, to receive the Lord's-supper, according to the usage of the church of England, within three months after their appointment. The design of the commons in bringing in this bill was to exclude *Papists* from places of trust and profit: several of whom the court had greatly promoted. But it was expressed so as also to exclude the *Protestant Dissenters*.

N. B. The Corporation and Test-acts, though flagrantly inconsistent with the common rights of good subjects, remain in full force to this day. And the late applications of the Dissenters to parliament for the repeal of them, have only served to bring upon them the most illiberal abuse of the High-church party, who in the town of *Birmingham* proceeded to such an excess of rage as to instigate a mob to burn the houses of Dr. *Priestley* and several other Dissenters, besides the two largest meeting-houses in that place. Similar excesses have been committed in other parts of the kingdom.

Q. 54. *How did the Dissenters act in this situation?*

A. They forwarded the bill, as it was so good a barrier against *Popery*; which circumstance afterwards, exposed them to the displeasure of the court. The *Papists* being excluded from places of trust, the court no longer discovered any tenderness for Protestant Nonconformists, but the

King issued out a proclamation for putting the penal laws against them in full execution; which accordingly was done. And several sham plots were fathered upon them to render them more odious to government.

*Q. 55. What was the effect of all these acts against the Nonconformists?*

*A.* Great numbers of them suffered the most extreme hardships, in being fined, plundered, driven from their families, and imprisoned. Their loss in their trades and estates in the space of three years, is computed at *Two Millions*; and *Eight Thousand* are said to have perished in prison in this reign. The same persecutions were also carried into *Scotland*; and there, as well as in *England*, many, to avoid the fury of their persecutors, fled their country.

*Q. 56. What was the character of James II. who succeeded to the crown on the death of Charles?*

*A.* He was a professed Papist; had imbibed the most arbitrary principles of government, and persecuted Nonconformists, by enforcing all the penal laws in being against them, with the utmost rigour. Many for their safety transported themselves into *Holland* and the *American* colonies. Great numbers who staid at home, not only endured the utmost severities that the laws inflicted, but were treated by their enemies with the greatest cruelty; particularly by Judge *Jefferies*\*, by whom many Dissenters, and other Whigs, were butchered in the most barbarous manner; for which the Duke of *Monmouth's* rebellion furnished a plausible handle.

\* See a specimen of his persecuting spirit, in his treatment of Mr. *Baxter* at his trial. *Noncon. Memorial*, ii. p. 533. Also of Mr. *Thomas Roswell*, whose trial is re-printed in the *Protestant Dissenters Magazine*.

*Q. 57. What was the effect of these and former cruelties?*

*A.* Very different from what those who inflicted them intended. The cause of Nonconformity, instead of being ruined, was strengthened thereby; partly through the infamous characters of the informers and persecutors, but chiefly through the piety, zeal, and fortitude of the sufferers, who "took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer" for conscience-sake. From these and the like causes, though such multitudes were murdered, or obliged to fly their country, their numbers were not greatly diminished by reason of additions from the established church; which several *Clergymen*<sup>†</sup> in this reign deserted, as a persecuting church, to take their lot among the Nonconformists.

<sup>†</sup> Mr. Neal mentions some of their names. See his *Hist.* vol. ii. p. 752.

*Q. 58. Did this persecution of the Dissenters continue through James's reign?*

*A.* No; the King very suddenly altered his measures, granted an universal toleration, and even preferred Dissenters to places of trust and profit; but it was evidently with a view the more easily to restore Popery. The Dissenters, being jealous of this, would not acknowledge the dispensing power, but readily granted the church that assistance she now asked of them against the Papists. For which, however, they were ill requited, as the solemn promises she made them in the time of her danger, were forgotten as soon as the danger was over.

*Q. 59. What was there remarkably favourable to Dissenters during this Prince's life?*

C 2

*A* William,

*A. William, Prince of Orange, a Protestant of glorious and immortal memory, by the management of the Whigs, was brought into England to support the Protestant-cause; at which James being intimidated, abdicated the throne, which William (with his amiable consort Mary) was invited to accept. This event is called the Revolution.*

*Q. 60. What act passed in this reign, in favour of the Dissenters?*

*A. The act of Toleration, which exempted Dissenters from suffering the penalties which the law inflicted, and permitted them (on certain conditions, to which they themselves in general consented) to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences.*

*Q. 61. Has the Toleration-act ever been repealed?*

*A. No; through the good providence of God, the enemies of the Dissenters have never been able to effect it, though they have several times attempted to abridge the liberties thereby granted them.*

*Q. 62. When had the Dissenters peculiar reason to fear their liberties were endangered since the Revolution?*

*A. In the latter end of Queen Anne's reign, when the Jacobite party had gained great strength and influence at court, an act of parliament was passed, called the Occasional-conformity-bill, which prevented any person, in office under the government, entering into a Meeting-house. Another called the Schism-bill, had actually obtained the royal assent, which suffered no Dissenters to educate their own children, but required them to be put into the hands of Conformists;*



formists; and which forbid all Tutors and School-masters being present at any conventicle, or dissenting place of worship.

Q. 63. *How came it to pass that this scheme for enslaving the Dissenters again was frustrated?*

A. The Queen died the very day on which this iniquitous act was to have taken place, (Aug. 1st, 1714) when the Elector of Brunswick, (George I.) a firm friend to civil and religious liberty, was proclaimed King of Great-Britain, who procured a repeal of the *Schism-bill* in the 5th year of his reign. In his illustrious family the sceptre has ever since continued, under whose equitable government our legal rights have been preserved, the Toleration-act maintained inviolate, and much greater indulgence granted to Dissenters than that act allows.

Q. 64. *What were the conditions by which the benefit of the Toleration-act was limited?*

A. All Dissenting Ministers were not only required to take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, and to make the declaration against Popery, but also to subscribe the doctrinal articles of the church of England.

Q. 65. *Did any Dissenting Ministers scruple thus to qualify themselves?*

A. Though some had no difficulty in doing it, others of them, even those that approved the doctrines of the church, as well as those of different sentiments, refused to subscribe the articles at the requisition of the civil magistrate, and as a condition of preaching the gospel, apprehending that this would be acknowledging a degree of authority in civil governors, which is injurious to christian liberty and the right of private judgment; but were willing to give all reasonable security for their behaviour as peaceable subjects.

*Q. Were the dissenting Laity subject to any difficulties from which the Toleration-act did not relieve them?*

*A.* The Toleration-act provided no relief for dissenting Tutors and School-masters; but all Dissenters who kept public schools, or taught youth in any private house, were liable (besides the forfeiture of their schools) to a fine of forty pounds, and to suffer three months imprisonment. Nor could any person be legally qualified to keep a school, or instruct youth, without a licence from the Archbishop, Bishop, or Ordinary, and a declaration of absolute conformity to the church of *England*.

*Q. 67. Did the Dissenters ever apply for a legal redress of these grievances?*

*A.* In the year 1772, the body of Dissenting Ministers in *London* brought a bill into parliament with this view: of which most of their brethren in the country expressed their approbation. But though it passed the House of Commons, it was thrown out of the House of Lords, the bench of Bishops using their influence against it.\* The next session the *London* ministers, with the concurrence of the generality of those in the country, renewed the application, but without success: though they had many learned advocates in the upper as well as the lower house, who defended their right in such a manner as to do signal honour to their cause, and to encourage their hope of redress in some future period.

\* Except that the Bp. of *Lincoln* divided against the rest of his brethren in favour of the Bill.

Dr. *Law*, the Bp. of *Carlisle*, soon afterwards fully exculpated himself from the charge of intolerance, in an excellent publication, entitled, *Considerations on the Propriety of requiring Subscription*, &c. in which he strongly expressed his

his approbation of the Dissenters Bill, and his friendly regard to the Dissenters.

Q. 68. *Have the Dissenters since obtained the relief which they sought in the matter of subscription.*

A. In the year 1779, without any farther application of theirs, an act of parliament passed whereby the benefits of the Toleration-act were granted to Protestant Dissenting Ministers, and School-masters, upon condition of their taking the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, making the declaration against Popery, and declaring their belief of the Holy Scriptures as containing a divine Revelation.

§ Dr. Ross, the Bishop of Exeter, on the 30th of Jan. preceding, preached a very liberal sermon before the House of Lords, in which he spoke strongly in favour of granting the Dissenters the liberty for which they had applied. It could not now, indeed, be objected to with any appearance of propriety or justice, since a bill had just passed for granting indulgence to the *Roman-Catholics*: A Bill which Protestant Dissenters highly approved. The opposition made to it by the *Protestant Association* has been ascribed to Dissenters (particularly by Bishop Newton in his Life) and urged as a proof of their persecuting spirit, but very unjustly; since, though some of them might be inconsistent enough to join that Association, the generality of them disapproved the principles on which it was formed, and not one regular dissenting minister in London signed their petition to parliament, though all were applied to for this purpose. The ideas of Dissenters on the subject of general liberty may be seen well expressed in *A free Address to those who petitioned for the repeal of the late Act in favour of the Roman Catholics*. By a lover of Peace and Truth. Johnson, 1780. Price twopence, or 12s. per hundred.





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THE  
PROTESTANT-DISSENTER'S  
CATECHISM.  
PART THE SECOND.

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THE  
REASONS of the PROTESTANT DISSENT  
from the ESTABLISHED CHURCH.

Q. 1. *WHAT* are the grand principles on which the Protestant Dissenters ground their separation from the church by law established?

A. The right of private judgement and liberty of conscience, in opposition to all human authority in matters of religion; the supremacy of Christ as the only head of his church, and the sufficiency of the holy scriptures as the rule of faith and practice.

Q. 2. *Doth not the scripture require us to be subject to the civil magistrate as the minister of God, for conscience-sake?*

A. Yes, doubtless, in all civil affairs\*, but not in matters of religion, much less in things contrary to the law of God, for God cannot deny himself; so that all human laws, which are inconsistent with the divine, ought to be disobeyed.

\* Rom. xiii. 1—5.

1 Pet. ii. 13, 14.

*Q. 3. But is every private man to judge for himself, whether the laws of his country are agreeable to the laws of God?*

*A.* Certainly in the affairs of religion, every man ought to judge for himself, since every man must render an account of himself to God †, who has given us an infallible rule in his word to guide us, and reasonable faculties to understand it; which private persons are as capable of using, to discover the way of truth and duty, as magistrates and large bodies of men. Besides, religion is a personal thing, and no further deserves the name than as it is the effect of conviction and choice.

† Rom. xiv. 12.

*Q. 4. But are not Priests our spiritual rulers, and are we not expressly required \* to obey them that rule over us?*

*A.* They have no juster claim to implicit faith and unlimited obedience than civil magistrates; nor those supported by the state than others. The word of God expressly forbids Christians giving up conscience to the direction of any man †: and the apostles themselves disclaimed all dominion over it ‡, and urged it upon

\* Heb. xiii. 7, 17.

† Call no man your Father upon earth—neither be ye called Masters—for one is your Master, even Christ. Matt. xxiii. 9, 10. In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. Matt. xv. 9. Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. Gal. v. 1.

‡ Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy. 2 Cor. i. 24. Neither being as Lords over God's heritage, but examples to the flock, 1 Pet. v. 3.

their

their hearers to examine and judge for themselves ||.

|| Philip said to Nathaniel, Come and see. John i. 46. Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right; Luke xii. 57. Whether it be right to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. Acts iv. 10. These (Bereans) were more noble than those of Thessalonica, in that they searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Acts xvii. 11. I speak as unto wise men, judge ye what I say. 1 Cor. x. 15. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. Rom. xiv. 5. Prove all things, hold fast that which is good. 1 Thess. v. 21.

Q. 5. *Have we any instances in scripture of wise and good men's refusing to conform to the national, established religion?*

A. Yes: Daniel followed the dictates of his own conscience in praying to his God, as he had been used to do, when the king had issued out a decree against it §; as also did the three Hebrew youths, in refusing to conform to the worship of the image which Nebuchadnezzar set up †.

In like manner the apostles of Christ disobeyed the Jewish priests and rulers in not conforming to the religion of their country; and when reproved by the High Priest, for violating

§ Dan. vi. 10.

† When "the princes, the governors and captains, "the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, "and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together at the dedication of the image, and an herald proclaimed the king's order for all the people to worship it;" and they refusing to do so, were threatened with being cast, for their *nonconformity*, into the fiery furnace; they nobly replied, "If it be so, our God whom we serve—will deliver us out of thine hand, O King. "But if not, be it known unto thee, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." Dan. iii. 17, 18.

their

their command, bravely answered, "We ought  
"to obey God rather than men\*."

\* Acts v. 29.

Q. 6. *May a few men who are dissatisfied with the national religion publish their private sentiments, and worship God according to them, in places of their own?*

A. If men have a right to think for themselves, they must have an equal right to act † according to their judgment and conscience; and are in duty bound to do it. So that where persons think the established forms of religion unscriptural or defective, a regard to their own edification, and the cause of pure religion, requires them to dissent. On this principle the first Christians dissented from the Jewish church, the Gentile converts from Pagan establishments, and the church of England from the church of Rome.

† See Dr. Furneaux's masterly *Essay on Toleration*, Sect. iii.

Q. 7. *Ought we not to be very cautious how we separate from a Christian and Protestant church?*

A. Doubtless it is not every trifling circumstance that will vindicate separations among Christians. But the Dissenters apprehend that the grounds of their separation from the church of England, are so many and important, as fully to justify them in it.

Q. 8. *What are the principal things in the church of England on which the Dissent from it is founded?*

A. 1. Its general frame and constitution as national and established.

2. The character and authority of certain officers appointed in it.

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3. The



3. The imposition of a stated form of prayer called the Liturgy, and many exceptionable things contained therein.
  4. The pretended right of enjoining unscriptural ceremonies.
  5. The terms on which ministers are admitted into their office.
  6. The want of Liberty in the people to choose their own ministers. And
  7. The corrupt state of its Discipline.
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## SECTION I.

### *Of the general Frame and Constitution of the Church of England.*

Q. 9. *WHAT* do the Dissenters think to be the scripture idea of a Church of Christ?

A. A congregation, or voluntary society of Christians, who commonly meet together to attend gospel-ordinances, in the same place. And they think every such society has a right to transact it's own affairs, according to the judgment and conscience of the members thereof, independently of any other societies whatsoever, or without being accountable to any but Jesus Christ, or restrained by any laws but his.

Those who first maintained this opinion in England, were called *Congregationalists*, and also *Independents*. But in this respect the *Presbyterians* here, are now agreed with them, as the *Baptists* have always been. This is the grand principle by which the Protestant Dissenters are distinguished, and in which they are all united. And this indeed is the only principle upon which their liberties can be maintained in their full extent: for if every christian society have not the right above mentioned, a door will be

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opened

opened to human governors in affairs of religion ; and it is no great matter whether they be the members of the *Legislature*, of a *Convocation*, or an *Assembly* ; the authority of each being void of foundation in scripture, and inconsistent with the natural rights of mankind.

Q. 10. *How doth it appear that this notion of a church of Christ is the scriptural one ?*

A. A number of Christians assembled for divine worship in a dwelling-house, is in scripture called a church\*. A church is spoken of as coming together in one place†. When affairs were to be determined relating to a church, all the members of it were called together to give their opinion‡. And we do not find any human authority acknowledged or claimed in ecclesiastical affairs.

\* Rom. xvi. 5. Greet the Church that is in their house. See also 1 Cor. xvi. 19. and Phil. 2. It is observable that the several congregations of Christians in the same province, are spoken of *not* in the *singular*, but the *plural* number. c. g. The *churches* of Judea, the *churches* of Galatia, &c.

† Acts ii. 1. 46. ch. v. 12, 14. 1 Cor. xiv. 23.

‡ Acts vi. 2. 5. xv. 4, 22.

Q. 11. *Wherein does the constitution of the church of England differ from this account of a Church in the New Testament ?*

A. The church of England is not a voluntary society, the whole nation being considered as members of it, whether professedly so or not ; and obliged by law (excepting those included in the toleration-act) at least thrice in the year, to communicate with it in the Lord's Supper. It is also incapable (as it is national) of being assembled in one place, that the members of it may give their vote in ecclesiastical affairs ; and the several congregations of which it consists, are  
equally

equally destitute of this liberty, being all obliged to an absolute uniformity in faith, worship, and discipline.

Q. 12. *Is not the word church used in Scripture in a larger sense than as denoting a particular congregation?*

A. Yes; it sometimes denotes the whole body\* of Christians throughout the world, commonly called, the universal or catholic church. But the church of England is not, and does not pretend to be the same with this †, as all intelligent persons must allow that many may, in this sense, belong to the church of Christ who are not members of the church of England.—Hence it follows, that the body of people through the nation, who adopt the established mode of worship, cannot be called a church, in the sense in which the word is used in the New Testament, where it always means either a particular congregation, or the whole body of Christians.

\* Acts xx. 28. Eph. v. 25, &c.

† N. B. The church of Rome expressly makes this arrogant claim. Hence the origin of the term *Catholic Church* and probably of national churches.

Q. 13. *What do the Dissenters object to the general constitution of the church of England?*

A. That it is a civil establishment; it being framed by human authority—its laws founded on acts of parliament, and enforced by civil sanctions—and the chief magistrate, as such, being its supreme head. Whereas, a church of Christ, according to the scripture account of it, is a society of persons united merely on religious views\*, whose laws are no other than the word† of God (which they have a right to interpret

\* John xvii. 16. xviii. 36. † Ps. xix. 7. Eph. 2. 20.

for themselves †), the sanctions of which are purely spiritual §, and whose supreme and only head is Jesus Christ ||.

† See Q. 4, note ||. § 2 Cor. x. 4. || Eph. i. 22.

Q. 14. *What power has the King in the church of England, which constitutes him its supreme head?*

A. The King (or Queen) "is vested with  
" all power to exercise all manner of ecclesiasti-  
" cal jurisdiction; and Archbishops, Bishops,  
" Archdeacons, and other ecclesiastical persons,  
" have no manner of jurisdiction ecclesiastical,  
" but by and under the King's majesty, who  
" hath full power and authority to hear and  
" determine all manner of causes ecclesiastical,  
" and to reform and correct all vice, sin, errors,  
" and heresies whatsoever †." The appointing of  
Bishops also is his prerogative, and the power of  
ordination is derived from him, and held during  
his pleasure.

† These are the words of the act 26 Hen. VIII. cap. I. This power Hen. VIII. transferred from the Pope to himself (when he quarrelled with him about the Queen's divorce), and the Kings and Queens of England have enjoyed it ever since.

Q. 15. *What objection have Dissenters to this authority of the King?*

A. Though they think it their duty to honour and obey the King in *civil* matters, they apprehend such power as our present constitution gives him in affairs of *Religion*, to be not only foreign to the province of the civil magistrate, but highly derogatory to the honour of Christ, whom God hath appointed "head over all things  
" to the church," and a gross infringement on the liberty of Christians, who, in matters of faith  
and



and conscience, are forbid being the servants of men. 1 Cor. vii. 23.

Q. 16. *May it not be of service to religion to have the authority of the chief magistrate engaged on its side?*

A. The religion of Jesus does not want the support of human power; his church is founded on a rock, more stable than any earthly establishment, and the gates of Hell shall never prevail against it\*. The interference of the civil magistrate in affairs of religion, has often been more injurious than beneficial, and this authority in matters of faith, is exceedingly dangerous, and indeed the claim is more absurd than that of the *Pope* himself, who has the pretence of infallibility as the ground of it.

\* Matt. xvi. 18.

Q. 17. *Have the Kings of England been used to exercise this authority in matters of faith?*

A. Yes; and the Queens also, in so great a degree as to reverse the votes of parliaments, and stop the proceedings of a whole Convocation of the Clergy. So did Queen *Anne* in the case of Mr. *Whiston*, who was condemned for Heresy.

Q. 18. *Did religion ever flourish in a nation where it was not established?*

A. The religion of Jesus, as established in the hearts of men, never flourished more than when it had (as at first) all the powers of the earth engaged against it.

Q. 19. *Was not the Jewish church national, and as such established?*

A. The Jewish church was doubtless *national*, and *established* likewise: but then it ought to be remembered it was not established by the power of the *civil magistrate*, but by *Jehovah* himself,

who was its king and lawgiver : and no human authority was admitted to interfere in the constitution or government of it. It is therefore highly unfit to be made the model of a church under so different a dispensation as the christian is, and never was intended to be so.

It has been remarked by some, that the Jewish church though national, was partly *congregational* also ; as all the males, through the whole country, were obliged, at certain seasons, to appear at *Jerusalem*.

## SECTION II.

### *Concerning the Officers appointed in the Church of England.*

Q. 20. *WHAT Officers are employed in the church of England under the King, to whom the Dissenters object ?*

A. Archbishops, Diocesan-Bishops, Archdeacons, Deans, Prebendaries, Canons, Minor-Canons, Chancellors, Vicars-general, Commissaries, Officials, Surrogates, Proctors, &c. offices which Christ never appointed, and which nothing in the New Testament warrants, but are the effect of an unnatural alliance of the church with the state, and mostly of popish original.

For an account of the nature and origin of most of these offices, See *Wilton's Review*, p. 153—159.

Q. 21. *How many orders of ministers are there in the church of England ?*

A. Three ; Bishops, Priests, and Deacons ; for which the Dissenters apprehend there is no scripture warrant. The *Bishops* we read of in the  
New

New Testament, were no other than the pastors of particular congregations often called *Elders* or *Presbyters* \*. The term *Priest*, is never therein applied to ministers as distinguished from other Christians, the priestly office (since Christ once offered up himself) being for ever abolished †. The scripture *Deacons*, are not ministers of the gospel, but temporal officers appointed to take care of the poor. (See *Acts* vi.)

\* These words are often used as synonymous with *Bishops*, the Greek word for which (ἐπισκοποι) plainly signifies no more than *overseers*.

† The office has a relation to sacrifices; and the application of the term to christian ministers is to be accounted for, from the popish doctrine of the sacrifice of the Mass, and of a real sacrifice in the Eucharist. See *Wilton's Review*, p. 120, 121, note.

Q. 22. *What is the number, office, and authority of the Bishops in the Church of England?*

A. Besides the Archbishops, who are two, and who preside over the others, the Bishops are twenty-four. They have the sole power of ordaining the clergy, and very great authority over them. They perform the rite of confirmation, and consecrate churches and church-yards. They are also invested with great secular power and dignity.

Q. 23. *What have you to object to the superiority of the Bishops over the clergy?*

A. No such distinction of ministers is appointed by Christ in his church, but on the contrary, he has expressly forbidden any of them to assume dominion over the rest ‡. And as to the office of an *Archbishop*, none pretend to produce any scripture-warrant for it.

‡ See Matt. xx. 25.—27. “Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them—but it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be  
“ chief

“ chief among you, let him be your servant.” Ch. xxiii. 8.  
 “ Be ye not called *Rabbi*, for one is your master, even  
 “ Christ, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your  
 “ Father upon earth, for one is your Father which is in  
 “ heaven.” N. B. The Bishops are called *Lords*, and right  
 reverend *Fathers* in God.

Q. 24. *Is there not something exceptionable in the manner of making a Bishop?*

A. There is a great deal of pomp and parade in this business, in which, the canonists say, there are these eight things: nomination, *cong   d’  lire* (or leave to choose), election, royal assent, confirmation, creation, consecration, and installation, or, as to an *Archbishop*, enthronement.

The *Cong   d’  lire* is sent from the King to the *Dean* and *Chapter*, with a recommendation of a person whom his Majesty thinks fit to fill the vacant see, whom accordingly they always *elect* to it. The ancient custom for the bishop elect to say *Nolo episcopari*, it seems is now disused; various ceremonies, however, are still retained which it might seem invidious here to particularize. The reader who wishes for further information respecting them is referred to *Nelson’s Rights of the Clergy*, p. 103, &c. or to *Burn’s Ecclesiastical Law*.

Q. 25. *What is objected to in the manner of ordination by Bishops?*

A. They require all whom they ordain to declare, that they are moved by the Holy Ghost, in undertaking the ministerial office; and then pretend (or seem as if they pretend) to confer the Spirit by the imposition of their hands, saying, “ Receive the Holy Ghost.”

Q. 26. *Can none officiate as ministers in the church of England, who have not been ordained by her own Bishops?*

A. No;



*A.* No; all other ordination is pronounced invalid, excepting that of the Roman-Catholics; who if they conform to the church of England, are not required to be re-ordained.

*Q. 27. What is the common argument for the exclusive right of the Bishops to ordain?*

*A.* That they have derived it by uninterrupted succession from the apostles.

*N. B.* This has, of late, by the most rational churchmen, been given up.

*Q. 28. What is objected to this right by uninterrupted succession?*

*A.* The scriptures nowhere mention it as necessary to render ordination valid. The church of England cannot prove that she is possessed of it. And if she could, she must have received it through the corrupt channel of the church of Rome.

*Q. 29. What do the Dissenters in general think concerning ordination?*

*A.* They apprehend that every man who is qualified for the ministerial office, by ability and piety, has a right to exercise it in any society that calls him to it; and that ordination is by no means necessary to the useful discharge of it. Accordingly, many of their ministers preach several years before they are ordained. But they think it is very decent and useful, and agreeable to the scripture model, when they are about to settle with any people as pastors, to have the approbation, the prayers, and the advice of some of their brethren\*; who pretend to no authority

\* *Note.* Some on these occasions use the form of laying on of hands, but without pretending to convey any spiritual gift, and others disuse it.

to constitute them pastors; that being derived solely from Christ, and the choice of the people.

*Q. 30. What is the extent of a Bishop's charge and authority in the church of England?*

*A.* Each bishop is the pastor of the whole Diocese, and has the Charge of all the souls in it, and the government of all the clergy, who are really only his curates; which surely is a trust far too great for any man to execute, as each Diocese comprehends some hundred parishes.

*Q. 31. What is the authority of a Bishop over his clergy?*

*A.* He not only has authority to inquire into their conduct, to exhort them to their duty, and to demand an oath of obedience to himself, according to the canons: but also the power of suspension; which seems too great for one man to be intrusted with, and especially for one christian minister to exercise over his brethren.

*Q. 32. What is the nature and design of the rite of Confirmation, as performed by the Bishops?*

*A.* It is designed for young persons thereby to take upon themselves the vow which their Sponsors made in their name at their baptism.

*Q. 33. What does the Bishop perform on these occasions?*

*A.* He thanks God for having regenerated them by water and the Holy Ghost, and forgiven all their sins. He then lays his hand upon the head of every person, and "certifies them all, " by that sign, of God's favour, and gracious " goodness towards them."

*Q. 34. What is required of persons in order to their being thus confirmed?*

*A.* Nothing

*A.* Nothing more than their having a certificate from their minister, that they can say the Lord's-prayer, the creed, the ten commandments, and the catechism; and their answering, *all together*, in the affirmative, to the Question, which is read of course, "Whether they  
"renew the vows made in their name at their  
"Baptism?"

*Q. 35. What do Dissenters object to this ceremony?*

*A.* That it has no foundation in reason, or scripture\*, and is attended with very dangerous consequences. Besides, should the propriety of the rite itself be allowed, every parish-minister seems to be as capable of performing it as a Bishop.

\* The principal text urged in favour of confirmation, is nothing to the purpose, viz. Acts viii. 14, &c. which refers to the extraordinary gifts conferred by Peter and John. The confirmation spoken of ch. xiv. 22. and xv. 41, was not by imposition of hands, but by *preaching*.

*Q. 36. What dangerous consequence is likely to arise from this rite?*

*A.* Ignorant people, who have too good an opinion of the Bishop to think he would declare a falsehood, are likely to look upon themselves to be, what he has declared they are, pardoned, regenerated, and interested in God's favour, and so conclude their state is safe, while yet they continue in their sins.

*Q. 37. What do Dissenters object to the consecration of churches and burying-grounds by the Bishop?*

*A.* They think that no ceremony can make one place more holy than another; that if it could, the common priests are as able to perform

form it as the Bishops, and that their pretensions of this nature tend greatly to promote a superstitious veneration for the places so consecrated, as well as for themselves.

Q. 38. *What is that secular power and dignity with which the Bishops are invested?*

A. They have their respective courts of judicature, held in their cathedrals, and issue out writs, not in the King's name (as other courts do), but in their own. They depute Chancellors to act as Judges; whose jurisdiction extends to all causes concerning marriages, last wills, administrations, &c. as well as to persons accused of various crimes, on which they pass sentence without a jury, and for which they inflict very heavy secular punishments. The Bishops also are Lords of Parliament, and as such have a seat in the House of Lords.

Some maintain that they are Peers of the Realm. See *Nelson*, p. 104—108. 3d edit. The Bishoprick of *Durham* has for many centuries been a *County Palatine*. The *Earldom of Sadbergh* is also annexed to this Bishoprick. The Archbishop of *Canterbury* is Primate and Metropolitan of all England, and next in dignity to the royal family. He has the probate of all wills in his province. When any die intestate, having goods in several dioceses, the administration belongs to him. (Ib. p. 61.) "It is his privilege by custom, to crown the kings and queens of England. He has also (by the Stat. 25 Hen. VIII. chap. 21.) the power of granting dispensations in any case not contrary to the holy scriptures, and the law of God, where the Pope used formerly to grant them. Which is the foundation of his granting special licences to marry at any place or time, to hold two livings, and to confer degrees in prejudice of the universities, &c." (*Blackstone's Comment.* Vol. I. p. 381.) "The Archbishop of *Canterbury* has indeed, by the Laws of England, such extensive powers, that ever since the death of *Laud*, the government has thought proper to raise to that dignity none but men of very moderate principles." *Guthrie's Geog. Gram.* page 189.



Q. 39. *What is objected to this dignity and power of the Bishops?*

A. It is not very consistent with their characters as the servants of the meek and lowly Jesus, or with their pretensions as the successors of the Apostles, whose weapons of warfare were not carnal §, and who affected no external pomp or worldly power †. It must greatly interfere with the spiritual duties ‡ of their office; and is not agreeable to the free spirit of the English civil constitution.

§ 2 Cor. x. 4. † 1 Cor. iv. 1, 10—13. ‡ Acts vi. 2, 4.

### SECTION III.

#### Of the LITURGY.

Q. 40. *WHAT is the mode of worship in the established church?*

A. A form of prayer is statedly used, called the Liturgy, or Common-Prayer.

Q. 41. *Do Dissenters think forms of prayer in themselves sinful?*

A. No; they think it far better to pray by a form than not at all, or in an indecent incoherent manner; but do not approve the use of a Liturgy, or stated form in public worship.

*Note.* Many dissenting ministers, v. g. Henry, Bennet, Doddridge, Watts, May, Bourne, Leland, &c. have drawn up forms, as helps to the devotion of the family and closer, and many of the people use them as they see occasion, though the generality prefer free prayer.

Some few Dissenting congregations have very lately introduced a Liturgy.

*Q. 42. What are the objections commonly urged against Liturgies in general?*

*A. 1.* That the scripture is silent with respect to the necessity or expediency of them, and refers to none in use, though it treats largely on divine worship, and mentions the prayers of good men, on various occasions.

We have no certain account of the use of any Liturgies in the first ages of the church; those of *St. Mark*, and *St. James*, and that of *Alexandria*, being manifestly spurious. They are first mentioned in the latter end of the 4th century, and then every bishop was left to draw up a form of prayer for his own church. *Neal's Hist.* Vol. I. p. 37.

2. It seems unreasonable, that christian ministers should be confined to an invariable form in their prayers, more than in their sermons.

3. That the use of such a form is attended with many disadvantages, both to ministers and people.

*Q. 43. What are the principal disadvantages of a Liturgy?*

*A. 1.* It tends to promote indolence in ministers, so far as it prevents the exertion of their faculties.

2. The constant repetition of the same things tends to deaden the affections of the worshippers, and promote formality.

3. Liturgies cannot be adapted to all the circumstances of different societies, and the several events which may occur, and which ought to be noticed in public prayer.

*Q. 44. What is objected to the Liturgy of the Church of England in particular?*

*A. 1.* That it is imposed by human authority, so that ministers must make no variation from it, whatever the peculiar circumstances of things may

may require; and no alteration can be made in it, however proper and necessary, without an act of parliament, which cannot easily be procured.

2. That there are many things exceptionable in the Liturgy itself; *e. g.* in the general form and construction of it—in the sentiment in several particular parts—and frequently in the language.

3. That the manner of reciting it is unnatural and unedifying, especially that used in cathedrals.

Q. 45. *What is exceptionable in the general form and construction of the Liturgy?*

A. 1. The method is irregular and confused.—The several prayers, collects, &c. are without any order or connection.

2. The parts into which it is divided are too many and too minute.—Some of the distinct prayers, and especially the collects\*, seem to have no distinguishing object, but are little more than introduction and conclusion.

\* *v. g.* Col. for 2d Sunday after Epiph. 2d before Lent? 3d, 4th, and 5th in Lent.

3. It is full of tautology and vain † repetitions. “Lord have mercy upon us,” and *gloria patri*, are introduced much too frequently. The Lord’s-prayer is used three or four times, and may occur six times in the same service. In the Litany, “Have mercy upon us miserable sinners,” is said eight times: “Good Lord deliver us,” eight times also: and, “We beseech thee to hear us good Lord,” twenty-one.

† See Matt. vi. 7.

4. It is in some views very defective.—The confession is much too general ; as indeed are the petitions and thanksgivings. And some cases are not provided for.

5. The petitions are not always adapted to the occasion. *e. g.* In the service for (what is strangely called) the *churching of women* : “ O Lord, save “ this woman thy servant—be thou to her a “ strong tower from the face of *her enemy*.” The same in the visitation of the sick.—The 3d Collect for evening prayer, “ Lighten our *darkness*, and “ defend us from all perils and dangers of *this “ night*,” is improper when read, as it often is, early in the afternoon : As likewise is that expression in the morning service, “ Who has “ brought us to the *beginning* of this day,” when read near noon, or, as sometimes it is, past it. (See *Cand. Disq.* p. 115.)

6. Many of the prayers are needless and redundant, *e. g.* Several of the Collects, in which no blessing is asked but what is prayed for in other parts of the service. The prayers for the King and Royal Family are disproportioned to the other parts of intercession.

The King is prayed for three times every Sunday morning, again in the communion service, and in each of the forms appointed for solemn days.

7. There is only one general form of prayer appointed ; the constant use of which at all times, morning and evening, is very unreasonable, and wearisome.

8. The whole of the service is too long, and might with great advantage be abridged or divided.

Q. 46. *What is exceptionable as to sentiment in particular parts of the Liturgy?*

A. 1.



## A. 1. In the Office of BAPTISM.

Such expressions are used concerning the efficacy of that rite, as naturally lead persons to conceive of it as a saving ordinance \*: which however is rendered ridiculous by the questions put to the Infant in the person of the sponsors, and the answers they make in its name, concerning its faith and future conduct †.

\* God is thanked for having *regenerated the child by his Holy Spirit*. The water is called the *laver of regeneration*, by which the child, being born in original sin and in the wrath of God, is received into the number of the children of God, and heirs of everlasting life. Accordingly in the *Catechism*, the child is taught to say of its baptism, "Wherein I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." A sentiment as dangerous as it is unreasonable and unscriptural.

† Q. *Dost thou in the name of this child renounce the devil and all his works, &c.?* Ans. I renounce them all. Q. *Dost thou believe in God, &c.?* Ans. All this I stedfastly believe. Q. *Wilt thou be baptised in this faith?* Ans. That is my desire. Q. *Wilt thou keep God's holy will, &c.?* Ans. I will.

## 2. In the COMMUNION SERVICE.

Some expressions strongly favour the notion of Christ's real presence in the bread and wine ‡: a superstitious regard to which is encouraged by the use of the term *Consecration*: and particularly, by the repetition of the consecration-prayer, if the first quantity be not sufficient †.

‡ "Grant us therefore so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and so to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, &c." When the minister gives the bread he says, "The body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy body and soul;" and when giving the cup, "The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy body and soul, &c."

† The order of the rubric respecting the bread and wine that is left, favours strongly of popish superstition, and ap-

pears somewhat ludicrous. "If any of the bread and wine remain unconsecrated, the curate shall have it to his own use; but if any remain of that which was consecrated, it shall not be carried out of the church, but the priest, and such other of the communicants as he shall then call unto him, shall, immediately after the blessing, *reverently eat and drink the same.*"

### 3. In the VISITATION of the SICK.

After the sick person has declared his assent to the articles of the creed, and professed his repentance and his charity with all men, he is to be "moved to make a special confession of his sins, if he feels his conscience troubled."—After which confession, the priest is required, "if he humbly and heartily desire it." to *absolve him.*

The form of absolution is really shocking, and down-right Popery. "Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left power to his church to absolve all sinners, who truly repent and believe in him, of his great mercy forgive thee thine offences: and by *his authority* committed to me, *I absolve thee from all thy sins*, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Amen.

### 4. In the BURIAL SERVICE.

This one service is read at all funerals, without distinction; whatever the age, circumstances, or character, of the deceased may be; yea, though they are known to have been the most abandoned Sinners, and hardened Infidels, and to have died without any signs of repentance; excepting they were \* *unbaptized*, self-murderers, or *excommunicated*; which last case very rarely happens.—In this service, the Minister is required to stile the deceased "Our dear brother"—to express a

\* The refusal of this service at the burial of *Infants*, who happen to die before they are baptized, is grounded on the shocking idea that they cannot be saved.

"sure

“ sure and certain hope of his resurrection to  
 “ eternal life—to thank God for having taken  
 “ him out of the miseries of this sinful world,” &c.  
 —Expressions, which (during the present relaxation of *church-discipline*) must often hurt the consciences of ministers †, and be attended with very dangerous consequences with respect to the people; who may naturally encourage themselves to go on in sin, on the presumption of obtaining happiness at last, while they so often hear persons of the most infamous characters, when dead, pronounced happy.

§ These cases however, in which persons are excommunicated *ipso facto*, are so many, that it is impossible for a clergyman to know whether he is authorized to read the burial service, without a very intimate knowledge of the deceased.

† On account of this Office, Archbishop *Sancroft* (as he told Dr. *Tillotson*) would never undertake the cure of souls. See *Cal. Life Baxt.* Vol. I. p. 226.

#### 5. In some of the Services for HOLY-DAYS.

Particularly that for January 30, and May 29. In the former of which, the death of Charles I. and in the latter, the restoration of Charles II. are commemorated in a manner founded on falsehood, and bordering upon profaneness.

On Jan. 30. Charles the I. is absurdly stiled a *Martyr*. A character is given him much greater than (from his History) he appears to deserve; and his death lamented, the guilt of it confessed, and the judgments of God on account of it deprecated, in a manner highly unjustifiable, even supposing his character had been what it is represented. But the most shocking part of the service is, the reading portions of scripture relating to the *sufferings of Christ*, as applicable to him.

The thanksgiving offered May 29, for the restoration of Charles II. as “ our most gracious sovereign:” and “ for restoring to us [by him] the public and free profession

“ fession of God’s true religion and worship—his sacred truth and gospel, to the great comfort and joy of our hearts;” are such as we cannot heartily join in when we think of the vices of his character, his attempts against the liberties of this country, and the immoralities and persecutions of his reign; unless we believed there was and could be no public and free profession of God’s true religion, &c. without the hierarchy and liturgy of the church of England.

6. *In some of the* PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE  
*appointed to be read.*

Those with which the service begins, (which are the same for the morning and afternoon) are by no means so pertinent as many that might be found. The Lessons are not always well chosen for edification. A whole chapter is sometimes read on a particular occasion, in which there are but a few words at all adapted to it. The Songs of the Virgin Mary and of Simeon, which are made a part of the worship in Evening-prayer, are too personal for a congregation to adopt. There seems to be no propriety in reading the Epistles and Gospels as distinct from Lessons, and especially, in reading some other portion of scripture, when there is no gospel or epistle suitable, as *for the gospel*, or *for the epistle*.

7. *In the use of the* APOCRYPHAL BOOKS :

From whence Lessons are appointed to be publicly read, and that in the room of some part of the sacred writings; which seems to give the Apocrypha equal authority with the Bible. Some of these lessons contain the most ridiculous stories in the whole book.

v. g. The fabulous and gross legends of *Bel* and the *Dragon*, of *Judith* and *Susannah*; (the former of which was first appointed to be read by the Common-Prayer of *Charles II.*) and above all the magical romance of receiving a fair virgin from the enchantments of her infernal lover,



lover, and conjuring away the amorous devil *Asmodeus*, by the fumes of a fish's liver. *Towgood*. p. 101.

#### 8. In the ATHANASIAN CREED.

This creed (which was taken *verbatim* from the *Mass-Book*) seems not calculated to explain or support the doctrine of which it treats. The damnatory clauses of it are particularly exceptionable, and render the church highly inconsistent, as she admits persons to her communion without requiring their belief of it, and expresses her hope of the salvation of all over whom the burial service is read, though they understood nothing of the doctrine contained in this creed, or were known to deny it.

N. B. Archbishop Tillotson expressed his wish that the church was well rid of this creed.

#### 9. In some parts of the LITANY.

The manner in which the *Trinity* is addressed, at the beginning, has been thought by *Trinitarians* † very exceptionable, as it is without scripture precedent. All the rest of the petitions are addressed to Christ alone. They are in general excellent, but that for deliverance from *sudden death* is what some cannot adopt, because they think it a benefit; and others, because they judge it best to leave the matter with God.

N. B. The following petition was *left out* of the *Litany* at the review in Queen Elizabeth's time, "*From the Bishop of ROME, and all his detestable enormities, good Lord deliver us.*"

† CALVIN in particular.

To the preceding objections against the church service may be added,

#### 10. The custom of BIDDING PRAYER.

This is evidently a relic of popery, and as it is now practised is a great absurdity: the minister having ascended the pulpit, exhorts the people  
to

to pray for the king, for the magistrates, for the clergy, &c. but gives no opportunity for their doing it, as he immediately repeats the Lord's prayer, and then proceeds to the sermon.

Bp. Burnet has preserved the form as it was in use before the Reformation, which was this: after the preacher had named and opened his text, he called on the people to go to their prayers, telling them what to pray for; "*Ye shall pray for the king, for the pope, for the holy catholic church, &c.*" After which all the people said their beads in a general silence, and the minister kneeled down likewise and said his. Then the sermon proceeded. *Hist. Ref.* 11. 20.

Q. 47. *What is objected against the manner of reciting the Liturgy?*

A. The chanting it, as in the cathedrals, is unsuitable to the nature of prayer, and the simplicity of Gospel-worship\*. And the manner in which the people join with the priest, in the parish churches, is unedifying, unnatural, and arbitrary: sometimes making responses ‡ to the petitions he offers: sometimes repeating a prayer along with him: sometimes saying broken parts of sentences after him: sometimes concluding the sentences he had begun: and in the psalms, he and they reading a verse alternately.

\* *Chanting* was first introduced in the church of *Antioch* by *Flavianus*, a man of loose morals, but fond of ceremonies. The church of *Rome* adopted it, where it was improved under several Popes and was completed in the time of *Gregory*, about the year 620, and from him entitled the *Gregorian cant*. *Austin* the Monk brought it into England. Pope *Vitalian* I. (A. D. 689) first appointed organs to be used with the vocal music.

*Dissert. on Cathed. Worship, in Comp. Hist. Ref.*

N. B. The book of Homilies, (to which every clergyman subscribes, as containing a godly and wholesome doctrine) expressly condemns chanting and playing upon the

the organs, as *forely displeasing to God, and filthily defiling his holy house.* Hom. on *Place and Time of Prayer.*

† Responses are used in no other protestant church, (*Neal.*) These also were introduced by Pope Gregory.

N. B. The alternative recital of the Psalms is not commanded by the church.

Q. 48. *How is it to be accounted for that there are so many exceptionable things in the Liturgy?*

A. The plain reason is, the greater part of it was taken from the old *popish liturgy*†; from which the first Reformers prudently made as little variation as possible. But their successors unaccountably rested satisfied with what they had done, and have made no material alteration since. Our church-governors, either through indifference, or an unreasonable \* aversion to innovations, or an apprehension of endangering the whole church by repairing part of it, have hitherto rejected the proposals of many learned clergymen† in the church, (as well as the Presbyterian ministers, in 1661,) for improving the established form.

† *Calderwood* in his *Church Hist.* says, That the Common-prayer is little else than a translation of several parcels put together of the *Roman Breviary, Missal, and Ritual.* These 6 Canticles are word for word from the *Mass-Book.* *Benedicite omnia. Benedictus Dom. Magnificat. Nunc dimittis. Quicumque vult* (or the *Athanasian Creed*) and *Te Deum* with *Gloria Patri* after every Psalm.—When, therefore, the *Devonshire men* were stirred up to rebellion, on account of the alteration of their *Mass-Book*, King *Edward VI.* tells them in a Letter, to quiet them, “As for the service in the English tongue, it perchance seems to you a new service, but yet indeed it is no other but the old: the self same words in English.” Accordingly, some of the *Popes* offered to confirm the English Liturgy. See *Delaune's Plea*, 47—52.

\* The Note relating to the 36th article (taken from Dr. *Furneaux's Letter to Blackstone*) is now omitted, on the suggestion of the late Rev. Dr. *Adams* of Oxford.

† See

† See the *Free and candid Disquisitions relating to the church of England*, (printed in the year 1749) *addressed to our governors in church and state, more especially to the Convocation: by dutiful sons of the said church*; In which a great number of alterations in the Liturgy are very sensibly and modestly proposed.

Q. 49. *In what manner is the public worship of the Dissenters conducted?*

A. By extemporary prayer, or, as it is sometimes called, free-prayer: in which the minister prays according to his own judgment and ability, without the help of a book.

Q. 50. *What warrant have they from Scripture for this way of praying?*

A. It was evidently in use long before Liturgies were or could be; for men had prayed to God two thousand years before any books were written. And there are examples of extemporary prayer in the sacred writings.\*

Q. 51. *What advantages do the Dissenters suppose to attend extemporary prayer?*

A. 1. That it obliges ministers (who use it in a proper manner) to an habit of diligence in conversing with divine things.

2. That it tends to keep up the attention, and excite the pious affections of the worshippers.

3. That it is capable of being best suited to the circumstances of the congregation, and to various sudden and interesting occurrences, which ought not to pass unnoticed in public devotion.

Q. 52. *How can the people join in extemporary prayer, since they must wait for the close of every sentence before they can understand the meaning of it?*

A. 1. In order properly to join in prayer with another, it is not necessary to adopt every word

\* Acts i. 24, 25. iv. 23—30.



as it is uttered; it is sufficient to assent to a petition when the whole is delivered.

2. However, those prayers which are called extemporary, are not (and ought not to be) always entirely *new*: many of the same expressions will often occur, and especially scripture-expressions, which may generally be understood and assented to, almost as soon as begun.

Several dissenting ministers have of late introduced their own written forms, as uniting the chief advantages of extemporary prayer and liturgies.

Q. 53. *Are not extemporary prayers liable to great improprieties in method and expression?*

A. It is allowed, they are not always so accurate as forms might be made. But persons of good natural abilities and education, may, by diligent care and constant use, acquire an habit of expressing themselves with a degree of accuracy sufficient for all the purposes of social devotion. And church-men ought to remember that there are many improprieties in the *Common-prayer*, equal to most that are observable in the prayers of the regular Dissenters.

Besides the improprieties in the Liturgy before remarked, (Q. 45.) it may not be amiss here to select some others in respect to Language only.

*Uncouth and obsolete words and phrases.* "Prevent us in all our doings.—Let thy mercy *lighten* upon us.—Ordered by thy *governance*.—Thine *honourable* and *true* son.—That we be *fulfilled* with thy grace.—Those things which we ask *faithfully*.—May do such things as be *rightful*.—For the *more* confirmation of the faith.—Through our sins and wickedness we be *fore* let and hindered.—Thy late *plague* of immoderate rain.—The spirit of *ghostly* strength. Great *marvels*.—*Deadly* sins, &c."

Besides these, many occur in the version of the *Psalms* read in the church (which is done from the *vulgate Latin*, and in which there are several gross mistranslations); e. g.

F

"Tush.—

"Tush.—Fie upon thee, fie upon thee.—Thou art my *worship*.—He is an *wholesome* defence.—Blessed are the *folk*.—The time thou hast *plagued* us.—O thou *most highest*.—With trumpets and *shawns*.—We have wished you *good luck*.—How sweet are thy words unto my *throat*.—I will bless her *viſuals*, &c. &c."

*Redundancies.* "Acknowledge and confefs.—Not diſſemble nor *cloak* them.—Pardoneth and abſolveth.—Vanquiſh and overcome.—Worthily deſerved.—Graciouſly hear us O Chriſt, graciouſly hear us O Lord Chriſt. (*See the end of the Litany*). We praise thee, we bleſs thee, we worſhip thee, we glorify thee, we give thanks to thee for thy glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father almighty." *Communion Service.*

*Want of Connection* ; particularly between the *Adreſs* and the *Petition*.—"Give peace in our time, O Lord, *becauſe* there is none other that fighteth for us, but only thou, O God.—O God who art the author of *peace* and lover of *concord*, in knowledge of whom, &c. defend us thy humble ſervants in all aſſaults, &c.—Almighty and everlaſting God, who alone workeſt *great marvels*, ſend down upon thy Biſhops and Curates, the healthful ſpirit of thy *grace*." In this laſt inſtance the connection unhappily ſuggeſts, what the compilers cannot be thought to have intended, viz. that it is a marvellous thing for Curates, and even Biſhops, to have grace.

*Absurd or Unintelligible.* "By the myſtery of thy holy incarnation, by thy holy nativity and circumciſion, by thy baptiſm, faſting, and temptation, &c. Good Lord deliver us.—Haſt given us grace in the power of the divine majeſty to worſhip the unity.—Thoſe things, which for our unworthineſs we dare not aſk, vouchſafe to give us.—Thou only art holy, thou only art the Lord, thou only O Chriſt, with the Holy Ghoſt, art moſt high in the glory of God the Father, Amen."—In one of the prayers in the communion ſervice, God is ſtiled *Holy Father*.—But the rubric orders that on *Trinity-Sunday* this title ſhall be omitted; as if God was not *Holy Father* that day as much as any other.

From this ſpecimen of faults in the eſtabliſhed Liturgy it appears, that church-men have not quite ſo much cauſe to boaſt of its perfection, and its ſuperiority to extemporary prayers, even in point of expreſſion, as might be imagined. And it ſhould be conſidered, that in the latter caſe improprieties, when obſerved, may be avoided in time to come: but in the former, the faults are eſtabliſhed as well as the forms,

forms, and must be adhered to, even by those who perceive and acknowledge them.

*Q. 54. But is it not requisite that Christians should maintain uniformity in their worship?*

*A.* If uniformity in divine worship had been necessary, we may be assured that Christ himself would have told us so, and the Apostles and first Christians would have maintained it; which there is not the least proof of their doing. And it seems strange that uniformity should be thought more necessary in prayer than in preaching, or in other things, in which variety is esteemed beautiful.

*Note.* It was not till *Austin's* time that the church began to consult about an agreement of prayers; but still there was no uniformity. Nay, in the darkest times of Popery there was a vast variety of forms in different sees, witness the offices *secundum usum Sarum, Bangor, York, &c.* *Neal's Hist.* Vol. I. p. 37.

*Q. 55. Did not Christ teach his disciples to pray by a form, called the Lord's-Prayer?*

*A.* It is not generally allowed, that our Lord intended this prayer of his to be always used in his church as a Form: it is by many considered only as a directory \* for our prayers. However, if it could be proved that it was designed as a standing form, this does not warrant the use of a *Liturgy*, drawn up by fallible men, much less the imposition of it by the civil magistrate.

\* "In this manner (*ὡτως*) pray ye." *Matt.* vi. 9.

*N. B.* *Luke* varies from *Matthew*, and the Church of *England* from both.

## SECTION IV.

## Concerning CEREMONIES.

Q. 56. *WHAT is the opinion of the Dissenters with respect to ceremonies in divine worship?*

A. They disapprove of such as are of mere human invention, especially when made necessary, as those of the church of England are, and think themselves bound to refuse complying with them.

Q. 57. *Are the ceremonies of the church of England forbidden in scripture?*

A. They are not expressly forbidden in scripture, (because they were not in use <sup>early enough</sup>) but all *Will-worship* † is, of which these are one kind; and as they are not *commanded* there, that is a sufficient reason for refusing to submit to them.

† See Col. ii. 20—23. “Why—are ye subject to ordinances—after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in Will-worship and humility.”

Q. 58. *Does not the church claim authority to decree rites and ceremonies in divine worship?*

A. Yes, expressly, in the 20th Article; but Dissenters deny the claim, and cannot submit to any of her ceremonies, till she can prove her authority to enjoin them from scripture.

Q. 59. *Is nothing to be required in the worship of God but what is commanded in scripture?*

A. Nothing but what is either expressly commanded, or necessarily implied in a command.

Q. 60. *Are not the ceremonies of the church in themselves indifferent? Where then can be the harm of complying with them?*

A. Though



*A.* Though they be allowed indifferent in themselves, they may not be so in all the circumstances of them; and if they are, they cease to be so, when enjoined by human authority, and made the terms of Christian communion.

To this purpose the words of the Apostle are remarkable, 1 Cor. vi. 12. "All things are lawful to me, but I will not be brought under the power of any." See, on this head, *Furneaux's* incomparable *Letters to Blackstone*, p. 156.—160, 2d Edit.

*Q. 61. Where can be the evil of submitting to human authority in things indifferent, for the sake of peace and uniformity?*

*A.* It would be acknowledging in those who have assumed the office of governors in the church, a right which Christ never gave them, the pretension to which is derogatory to his honour: and it would be giving up that "liberty wherewith Christ has made us free," and in which we are exhorted to "stand fast." Gal. v. 1.

*Q. 62. Are we not commanded to "let all things be done decently and in order?" May not, therefore, the heads of the church, appoint whatever is necessary thereunto?*

*A.* All Christians must judge for themselves what is decent and orderly. Some think those things to be so, which others deem the reverse. And no persons whatsoever have a right to determine for any but themselves, for we own no heads of the Church upon Earth.

*Q. 63. Are any bad consequences likely to arise from those few ceremonies which the church of England has appointed?*

*A.* They can do no good, and may be abused to bad purposes. They tend to destroy the simplicity

plicity of divine worship; they encourage superstition, and lead the way to Popery, which abounds with human inventions.

*Q. 64. But does not the church of England disclaim the errors of Popery?*

*A.* It does so in words, but not in fact, so long as it claims authority in matters of faith, or a right to decree ceremonies. Those ceremonies which it uses are evidently of popish original, and upon the same principle that it adopts these it might admit all the rest.

*Q. 65. What are the ceremonies used in the church of England?*

*A.* 1. Bowing towards the East. 2. Bowing at the name of Jesus. 3. Signing with a Cross in Baptism. 4. Particular Gestures in worship, especially kneeling at the Lord's supper.

*Q. 66. What is the ceremony of bowing to the East?*

*A.* The communion-table (which is called the altar, and is enclosed with rails) is placed at the east end of the church; and to it, rigid churchmen turn their faces, from all other parts, when they say the Creed, and bow when they come to the name of Jesus Christ.

*N. B.* This ceremony was recommended by Abp. Laud's Canons, and enforced by him with great severity.

*Q. 67. What do Dissenters object to this ceremony?*

*A.* 1. That christian churches are to have no altars ||, but only a convenient table at which to administer the Lord's supper.

2. That there is no reason why this should be placed in the eastern part of the building, that being no more sacred than any other. Nor was it

it so placed after the Reformation, till *Laud's* time, but in the body of the church †.

3. That the communion-table has no more sanctity in it than any other table, and that the custom of bowing towards it had it's rise in Popery, which teaches, that the bread and wine placed upon it, are the very body and blood of Christ; which the church of England professes \*, with all other Protestants, to deny.

4. That bowing the body in any particular part of divine worship is an unscriptural ceremony, and favours of superstition. *Col. ii. 18.*

5. Worshipping towards the East, seems to have been an old heathen custom, which the scripture expressly condemns. See *Ezek. viii. 16.*

|| The primitive Christians had no altars: Pope *Sylvester* first consecrated them, A. D. 1334.

† Accordingly the Rubric says, “the table shall stand in the body of the church or chancel.”

\* Not indeed quite *consistently* while some expressions in the Liturgy remain. See p. 45.—The Catechism says, “the thing signified in the Lord's Supper is, the body and blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful.”

Q. 68. Does not the scripture expressly require (*Phil. ii. 10.*) that “at the name of Jesus every knee should bow?”

A. That passage of scripture cannot reasonably be taken in a literal sense, and therefore does not authorize the practice of bowing the body, when the name of Jesus is mentioned.

Q. 69. How doth this appear?

A. 1. It is unreasonable to suppose, that such a ceremony should be enjoined in honour of the Son, and not of the Father also; or at the mention of the name of *Jesus*, and not of any other of the

the names by which the Son of God is as frequently called.

2. If any part of this text is to be literally taken, the whole of it ought to be so, which is too absurd to be admitted; for it is there required also, that "every tongue should confess that Christ is Lord, of things in heaven and on earth, and under the earth."

3. That church-people themselves do not practise according to the literal sense of this text, for none of them (except the women) bow the *knee*, but the *HEAD*.

4. That the literal translation of the passage, is not *AT the name*, but *IN* † the name of Jesus, &c.

5. Some learned and zealous Divines\* of the church have given up this text as not to the present purpose.

† *Ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι*. It is observable that in the common-prayer book this was read (as in the old translation of the Bible) *IN the name*, &c. (viz. Ep: for *Palm-Sunday*) till *Laud* made this alteration, as he did many more, without the sanction of convocation or parliament. *Neal*.

\* *Dr. Nichols* in particular.

Some have said that this ceremony is not enjoined, but is founded only in custom; but this is a mistake. The 52d *Injunction* of *Queen Elizabeth*, (published A. D. 1559) is as follows, "It is to be necessarily received, that whensoever the name of Jesus shall be, in any lesson, sermon, or otherwise pronounced, due reverence be made of all persons young and old, with lowness of courtesy, and uncovering of heads of the mankind, as thereunto doth necessarily belong, and heretofore hath been accustomed." See also *Canon* 18.

Q. 70. *What is the pretence for the Priest's crossing the forehead in baptism?*

A. It



*A.* It is said to be done as a token, that the person baptized "shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner."

The Cross in baptism was first introduced in the 4th Century, by a sect called the *Basiliidians*.

*Q. 71. What do Dissenters object to this ceremony?*

*A. 1.* That Christ never appointed it.

2. If the mark of a Cross must be used as a badge of a disciple of Christ, it ought either to be visible and permanent, or often repeated, as it is by the *Panists*.

3. To use this sign in baptism is to make two sacraments of one, according to the definition of a sacrament, as "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace."

4. To use any ceremony in baptism as a token of the Cross (or sufferings) of Christ, is to make this ordinance interfere with the Lord's supper; in which bread and wine are divinely appointed with this special design.

5. Making this ceremony essential to the administration of baptism, is an unreasonable and unjust imposition on the consciences of those who might scruple it.

*Q. 72. What is there exceptionable in the church respecting Gestures in divine worship?*

*A.* The church authoritatively requires the people to be continually changing their postures; to stand in particular parts of the service, to kneel in others, and to sit in others, when neither scripture nor reason point out the difference\*; and always to kneel at receiving the sacrament.

\* The

\* The most unaccountable instance of this kind is, the order to *fit* when the *Epistles* are read, and to stand at the reading of the *Gospels*.

Q. 73. *Is not the reverent posture of kneeling the best suited to the solemn ordinance of the Lord's supper?*

A. If so, our Saviour certainly knew it, and would have enjoined it, or taught us to use it by practising it with his disciples, when he first instituted the ordinance.

Q. 74. *Is it certain that the posture of the Dissenters is the same with that which our Lord and his disciples used?*

A. No; but it is certain they used the same posture with that in which they received their common meals\*. The Dissenters therefore think that, as sitting is the common table-posture now, they come the nearest to our Saviour's pattern in using it at his table. This is most suitable to the idea of the Lord's supper as a feast; and it was doubtless the converting the table into an altar, that introduced the custom of kneeling at it†.

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\* They sat round the table, supporting themselves by leaning with the left elbow upon it.

† Pope *Honorius* ordained it. A. D. 1214.

Q. 75. *But why should Dissenters object to so trifling a ceremony as kneeling at the sacrament, since they do not scruple kneeling at prayer?*

A. 1. They cannot think it a trifling ceremony, when, as enjoined by the church, it looks greatly like the adoration of the elements, and took its rise from the popish adoration of them, as the very body and blood of Christ.

2. Besides,

2. Besides, the church of England *imposes* the kneeling posture as a necessary term of communion, and for this reason alone (supposing it indifferent in itself) it ought not to be submitted to.

Q. 76. *Do not the Dissenters make it a term of communion to receive sitting?*

A. No; the communicants among them are entirely at liberty to use the posture they like best, and some few have been known to kneel.

Q. 77. *Are there not some other ceremonies observed in the church of England?*

A. There are several customs which greatly partake of the nature of ceremonies, and are liable to much the same objections: *e. g.* Wearing particular habits.—Observing certain days as holy.—The distinction of places.—And the use of Sponsors in baptism. All which are mere human and arbitrary appointments.

Q. 78. *What is exceptionable in respect to habits?*

A. Besides the distinction made in the form and colour of their garments, according to the different orders of the clergy; whenever they read the prayers, or administer the sacraments, or other rites, they are obliged to have on the *Surplice*, which is made of white linen, as an emblem of purity; which, if there be a sermon, is worn over the other robes, and taken off when the prayers are ended.

Q. 79. *What is the opinion of the Dissenters concerning these habits?*

A. They consider them as relicks of popish superstition, particularly the \* surplice, and the change of raiment in the time of divine service. But they especially object to the imposition of  
any

any kind of dress in the worship of God; though they do not conceive of any one form, or colour of a garment, as in itself sinful more than another.

\* The surplice was first worn by *Pagan* priests, and was brought into the church of *Rome* by Pope *Adrian*, A. D. 796.

Q. 80. *What days doth the church appoint to be kept holy?*

A. No less than 150 in the year†, besides the Lord's-day. V. g. 29 feasts, 16 vigils (or fasts before holy-days) 40 fasts in Lent, 12 Ember-days, 3 Rogation-days, 4 Solemn-days, and all Fridays in the year, (excepting Christmas-day) which, besides those in Lent, are 46.

† See the Calendar and Table of Feasts, &c. If it be said, these days are not all designed to be kept holy, it is replied, the 13th Canon as strictly enjoins the celebration of them as of the Lord's-day. If it be now thought needless to keep them, why are they not abolished?

Q. 81. *Are not some of these days observed with peculiar solemnity?*

A. Yes; *Christmas-Day*, *Good-Friday*, *Easter-Sunday*, and *Whit-Sunday*; on which days (excepting *Good-Friday*, which is a solemn fast) there is a communion in all the parishes, and in many of them on these days only in the whole year.

Besides these, most other *Sundays* in the year are distinguished by particular names as they are in the church of *Rome*. E. g. The 1st. 2d. 3d. and 4th. Sunday in *Advent*, and six after it. *Septuagesima* Sunday, the 3d. before Lent. *Sexagesima* Sunday, the 2d. before Lent. *Quinquagesima* Sunday, the next before Lent. Five Sundays in Lent. *Trinity* Sunday; and 25 Sundays after it.

Q. 82. *What do Dissenters object to the appointment of these holy-days?*



*A.* 1. It is impossible many of them should be observed without a criminal neglect of secular business.

2. Such observances encourage superstition and will-worship, and are a tacit reflection on the great head of the church, who has required no day to be kept holy but the weekly sabbath.

3. Some passages in scripture strongly discourage them; especially Gal. iv. 9—11. “How turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.”

*Q.* 83. *What is particularly objected to the observation of Saints days?*

*A.* It looks like the adoration of departed spirits as practised in the church of Rome, and thus leads to Popery, as it evidently sprang from thence.

*Q.* 84. *What distinction of places is remarkable in the Establishment?*

*A.* Besides the supposed holiness of the consecrated building, improperly called *the church*, the peculiar sanctity of the *Altar* demands particular notice. The communion-table (which from the popish notion of the sacrifice of the Eucharist, was called an altar) is placed in the *Chancel* (which is situated at the *East* end of the *Church*) upon an ascent, and enclosed with rails, within which the *Priest* alone enters. To this the minister comes from the *Desk*, in the midst of the prayers, to read part of the communion-service, though there be no communion, *viz.* the Commandments, the Epistles, the Gospels, and the *Offertory*\*.

\* Passages of scripture recommending liberality to the poor, and to the clergy; which is collected while these

are read. The above are in some churches read at the altar, when situated so far from the body of the place that few of the people can hear. *N. B.* The priest is required to stand on the *North* side of the table.

The *Marriage* ceremony is also performed at the altar, which doubtless had its rise in Popery, which makes Matrimony one of the seven sacraments.

If it be objected that the Dissenters are inconsistent in submitting to be *married* at the altar, it is answered, they consider marriage as a *civil* affair, and therefore can submit to the will of the magistrate in regard to the *place*, as well as other circumstances of this rite. — But perhaps in this respect the *Quakers* are the most consistent.

Q. 85. *What is the office of Sponsors in the Baptism of infants?*

A. Sponsors (or, as they are commonly called, *God-fathers* and *God-mothers*) personate the child at its baptism, and solemnly engage for its religious education, and even “promise and vow three things in its name: 1st. That it shall renounce the Devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh. 2. That it shall believe all the articles of the christian faith. And 3. That it shall keep God’s holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of its life.”

For every *Male*-child there must be two *God-fathers*, and one *God-mother*; for every *Female*, one *God-father*, and two *God-mothers*. *N. B.* We have no account of any earlier than the 5th century.

Q. 86. *What are the chief exceptions against the office of Sponsors?*

A. 1. It excludes the parents from engaging for the education of their own children, who are, in general,

general, the fittest to undertake it, and who, after all, must have the chief concern in it.

*Note.* The parents are, by the 29th Canon, expressly excluded being sponsors, and even excused being present.

2. It is an hardship to be obliged to provide three sureties, for every child, when none are obliged to undertake the office.

3. It is making a human addition to an ordinance of Christ, and a new condition of receiving it: for none can be baptized in the church of England without sponsors.

They are dispensed with in the private *half baptism*; a ceremony, for which it is difficult to conceive any rational foundation. The original of it doubtless was the same with that of allowing *midwives* to baptize, *viz.* the opinion that none dying unbaptized can be saved.

4. The engagement is of such a nature, that none can literally fulfil it. That the child shall *renounce the Devil and all his works, &c.* is what the best man on earth cannot be answerable for.—If it be said,—“all that the sureties can be supposed to promise is, that they will use all proper means, that the child may understand and believe the articles of the christian faith, and maintain a truly christian conduct.” It is replied,

5. *This* engagement is too solemn for any to enter into, who do not mean to have a principal concern in the child's education; which it cannot be supposed, sponsors in ordinary should intend, or even be capable of. And it might well be imagined, that many ignorant and immoral persons, through the necessity of having sureties, and for want of better, would be tempted into hypocrisy and a solemn mockery of God, by promising what they never meant to fulfil. This is accordingly known to be a common case. And thus

6. Infant-baptism is often made the occasion of sin, or is turned into a farce, and at best degenerates into a mere matter of ceremony. This is especially the case when persons are sponsors by proxy.

## SECTION V.

### *Of Subscription to ARTICLES.*

Q. 87. *ON what terms are ministers admitted into the church of England?*

A. Ministers are all required to subscribe and declare their hearty assent to certain points of faith, commonly called the *Thirty-nine Articles*\*, as being in nothing contrary to the word of God.

\* The title of them is: "Articles agreed upon by the Archbishops and Bishops of both provinces, and the whole Clergy in the Convocation, holden at London in the year 1562, for avoiding of diversities of opinions, and for the establishing of consent touching true Religion." His Majesty in his declaration prefixed to the Articles, "prohibits his loving subjects the least difference from them, or putting their *own sense* upon them, but requires them to be taken in the literal and grammatical sense."—And yet *Archdeacon Paley* attempts to prove, that any one may subscribe who is not a *Papist*, a *Puritan*, or a *Baptist*. How unworthy such a writer!

N. B. Every youth at his admittance into the University of *Oxford*, is obliged to subscribe these Articles, and this among the rest, "that general councils may err, and that the church of *Jerusalem*, *Alexandria*, &c. have erred;" so that (as a learned Clergyman remarks,) "even children are looked upon by the church of England as of sufficient capacity to judge concerning the decrees of councils, and as having a right to censure them when they find them to be erroneous." *Ben. Mord. Inquiry*, p. 36.

Q. 88.



Q. 88. *Are not these Articles generally allowed to be orthodox? Why then do Dissenters object to them?*

A. The controversy is not about the sense of the Articles, (which is generally allowed to be *Calvinistical*†) but about the authority assumed by fallible men, to draw up Articles of Faith for others to subscribe, as a necessary qualification for preaching the gospel: an authority which the church of England expressly claims.

See Art. xx. "The church hath power to decree rites and ceremonies, and hath *authority in controversies of faith*." To the truth or falsehood of this assertion, the whole controversy between the church and the Dissenters may be reduced. See *Furn. Lett. to Blackstone*, p. 140.

It is a singular circumstance, not generally known, that this famous clause in the xxth Article (which is inconsistent with the former Article and the following part of this) is an interpolation. It was not inserted by the compilers in 1562; it was unknown to the convocation in 1571, not being in the book then ratified by parliament, as Dr. Fuller acknowledges. In the *Syntagma Confessionum* published at Geneva 1612, though all the other Articles are entire, the xxth begins with these words: *Ecclesie non licet quicquam constituere quod verbo Dei adversatur*: i. e. *It is not lawful for the church to ordain any thing repugnant to the Word of God*. A Letter of Hales to Abp. Laud, 1636, necessarily implied that the clause was not authentic. And Heylin says, that in 1634 Latin copies of the Articles were printed at Oxford without it, and that he had such an edition printed in 1636, by Litchfield, Printer to the University. See Mr. Pope's Letters to Nisbet, p. 153—355. It remains to be discovered, when and by whom this clause was inserted, and why it is not expunged.

† Much, however, is to be said for the contrary. (See Tucker's Letter to Kippis, and a late *Dissertation* on the XVIIth Article.) But these Articles include many particulars besides what relate to this controversy, which *Calvinistical* Dissenters can no more subscribe than others, which those of them who formerly qualified, seem not to have attended to: for instance,

ART. iii. "That Christ went down into *Hell*; i. e. into the place of the damned. So the compilers meant.

Art. iv. "That he ascended into heaven with his flesh and bones, and every thing appertaining to man's nature;" contrary to 1 Cor. xv. 50.—Also, that "he sitteth in Heaven till he shall return to judge all men at the last day;" which the *millenarians* cannot assent to.

Art. vi. "That the test of the canonical books of scripture is,—that their authority *never was doubted* in the church;" which does not apply to the epistle to the *Hebrews*, that of *James*, the 2d of *Peter*, the 2d and 3d of *John*, that of *Jude* and the *Revelation*, &c. nor to some part of the Old Testament.

Art. viii. "That the *Nicene* creed, the *Athanasian* creed, and the *Apostle's* creed, are to be thoroughly received, because they may be proved by certain warrants of scripture;" whereas they are inconsistent with each other, and in some points contrary to the 1st and 2d Article. See *Benj. Ben. Mord. Inquiry*, p. 34, 35.

Art. xxiii. "That no one can lawfully preach, or administer the Sacraments, who is not called by those who have public authority."

Art. xxxiii. "That a person rightly cut off from the church is to be considered as an heathen till he be reconciled by penance, and received into the church by a judge that hath authority thereunto." In subscribing which a Dissenting Minister testified his approbation of the corrupt discipline of the church of England, the constitution of her spiritual courts, and of the popish doctrine of penance, and consented to anathematize himself and all his Dissenting brethren. See Q. 97. Note, and Q. 112—118.

Art. xxxvii. "That in the holy Scriptures God has given to all godly princes, the prerogative to govern in ecclesiastical as well as temporal affairs."

If the reader should doubt the sense of any of these articles, it is apprehended he will receive the fullest satisfaction on a careful perusal of Dr. *Wilton's Review of some of the Articles*.

Q. 89. *What is particularly objected to the requisition of such subscription?*

A. 1. That Christ never committed such authority to any man, or body of men.

2. That

2. That none can be qualified for it without being infallible.

3. That it is a tacit reflection upon holy scripture, as not being sufficiently explicit.

4. That it is an infringement of christian liberty, and tends to discourage a free inquiry after truth.

5. That it may be the means of promoting and establishing error ; and must be so in different churches, which all have (and the church of *Rome* among the rest) an equal right to demand subscription to their respective opinions.

6. That it tends to keep some inquisitive, conscientious, and able men out of the church, while it admits many idle, ignorant, mercenary persons, who either take the truth of the articles upon trust ; or who, to answer their own ends, would subscribe any other articles, though contrary to these.

Q. 90. *What is the grand argument which the church uses to defend her requiring subscription ?*

A. That it is necessary to secure uniformity of sentiment among her ministers.

Q. 91. *What is replied to this argument ?*

A. 1. That uniformity of sentiment is not necessary to christian edification, and is never to be expected in the present state.

2. That if it were, demanding subscription to articles is not the way to secure it ; for it is not in the power of ecclesiastical law to alter men's belief, though it may their profession.

3. That the sense of the articles themselves is disputed, and persons of very different sentiments profess honestly to subscribe them.

4. That the church of England, does not seem so much concerned about uniformity of faith in her clergy, as uniformity of subscription ; for,  
though

though all are required to subscribe the same articles, no inquiry is made whether they preach according to them, nor any notice taken of such as deny them.

*Q. 92. Is there really a diversity of sentiments among the clergy, notwithstanding their subscription?*

*A.* There is as great diversity of sentiments among the established clergy, as among any other body of ministers, as appears both from their preaching and their writings; which is the source of much controversy among them: and their having all subscribed the same articles, is the occasion of mutual reproaches.

*Q. 93. Do not Dissenters require a confession of faith from their ministers when they are ordained?*

*A.* The generality of them expect one, but it is voluntary, and always in the minister's own words; which is a very different thing from subscription to a particular form, as a condition of being admitted to the ministerial office.

Some dissenting ministers of late have refused making any confession of faith at their ordination.

*Q. 94. Is any thing else required of the clergy, besides subscribing the 39 articles?*

*A.* Yes; they are obliged to declare their belief, that there is nothing in the common-prayer-book, and the book of ordination, contrary to the word of God.

*Q. 95. What is there unreasonable in this?*

*A.* It is hard to suppose that in so large a volume, composed so soon after the Reformation from Popery, every thing should be perfectly agreeable to the word of God; or that so numerous a body of men as the clergy are, should believe that it is so; or indeed, that such a belief should be necessary to make them acceptable and useful ministers of Christ.

*Q. 96.*



Q. 96. Does the church require any thing more of the clergy previous to their ordination?

A. Yes; they are obliged to swear obedience to the Bishop, the Ordinary, and their successors, in every thing required in the canons. This is called canonical obedience.

N. B. The oath of canonical obedience is not limited to the Canons of 1603, (in number 141) for many of the old *Popish Canons* remain in full force. And it is generally agreed that *Laud's Canons* of 1640 bind the *Clergy*, as they passed the Convocation; accordingly Bp. *Gibson*, in his *Codex*, always refers to them as so doing.

Q. 97. Why is this requirement exceptionable?

A. Because the New Testament enjoins no such submission in Christ's ministers to one another, or any human superior; and because some of these canons are such as many learned conscientious ministers cannot obey.

V. g. The Clergy, among other things, are obliged by these Canons, whenever the Bishop, or Ordinary, shall require it of them, to publish a sentence of excommunication against any who shall presume to speak against the common-prayer,—or deny any of the 39 articles, or—condemn any of the ceremonies of the church,—or deny the authority of the Arch-bishops, Deans, Arch-deacons, &c.—or affirm that the congregations of Protestant Dissenters are true churches.

N. B. The excommunication in all these cases is *ipso facto*. See the Canons of 1603, No. 2—12.

Among many other curious prohibitions in the Canons are the following: “Neither shall any minister, *without the licence or direction of the Bishop*, appoint or hold any meetings for sermons,—or attempt, upon any pretence whatsoever—to cast out any DEVIL, or DEVILS.” Can. 72.—“We further ordain, that no ecclesiastical person shall wear any wrought *night cap*—or any *light-coloured stockings*, &c.” Can. 74.

Q. 98.

## 82 *Concerning the Choice of Ministers.*

Q. 98. *But since the Clergy only are obliged to subscribe, why need the Laity make it an objection against their conformity?*

A. 1. The Laity may justly be dissatisfied with a church which requires such unreasonable and unscriptural terms of conformity from the clergy. Especially as,

2. The emoluments connected with these subscriptions, are a strong temptation to prevaricate, and tend to bring those men into the church who are most unfit to have the charge of souls; as well as to keep out some of the most conscientious, who are best qualified for such a trust. And,

3. It becomes all honest men to bear their testimony against all impositions in matters of religion, though they themselves be not immediately affected by them; and to encourage those ministers who, on a principle of conscience, separate from the national church.

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## SECTION VI.

### *Concerning the CHOICE of MINISTERS.*

Q. 99. *HOW are congregations supplied with ministers in the church of England?*

A. Many livings (as they are called) are in the gift of the King (as all the Bishopricks in effect are); some, of the Lord Chancellor; some, of the Bishops; and some of the Universities: but many belong to the nobility and gentry. Every person having a living in his gift, (who is called the patron) may present whom he pleases to it,  
and

and the people have no liberty to object, nor the Bishop to refuse (except in a few cases) giving institution and induction.

*N. B.* These livings (*i. e.* the advowsons, or right of presentation) are to be bought, and are commonly advertised in the public papers.

*Q. 100. What is the ill consequence of this power of patrons?*

*A.* The minister thus appointed is often disagreeable to the people, and sometimes shamefully disqualified for his office; as preferment is more commonly obtained by favour than by merit. Irreligious Patrons of livings will rather give them to such clergymen as will make themselves agreeable companions, or serve a political interest, than to such as will be faithful to the souls of men.

*Q. 101. In what manner do Dissenters think that congregations should be supplied with ministers?*

*A.* They think that no person whatsoever is authorized to impose a minister upon others, but that every congregation has a right to choose its own.

*Q. 102. How do they vindicate this opinion?*

*A.* It seems as reasonable that all persons should choose their own Ministers, as their own lawyers or physicians. An imposition in the former case, is indeed, as much more unreasonable than in the latter, as the interests of the soul are more important than those of the body.

*Q. 103. Is it not better for the clergy, that the people should be obliged to receive those who are thus sent them?*

*A.* It is better, doubtless, in a temporal view, for those who have interest with great men, and nothing to recommend them to the people; but  
not

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not for the generality of the clergy, or the most deserving of them, much less for the church: for true excellence of character, especially humility, and faithfulness in the sacred office, are too often found rather an hindrance to promotion, than the means to obtain it. Whereas, if the choice of ministers resided in the people, the best preachers would commonly have the preference; and thus there would be a powerful motive to emulation among the clergy.

*Q. 104. Is not the choice of ministers among the Dissenters, often attended with contentions and divisions?*

*A.* Sometimes it doubtless is; but this is not, comparatively, often the case, much less necessarily so. However, the best regulations may be attended with some inconveniences, and the same argument equally affects the choice of Representatives in Parliament.

*Q. 105. But are the people proper judges of a minister's qualifications?*

*A.* In general they may be supposed as good judges for themselves, in this case, as the patrons of livings are for them; who are often utter strangers to the parishioners. If in any instances they judge amiss, they are accountable to God only. And if, upon trial, they find they have chosen an improper person, they can dismiss him at their pleasure.

*Q. 106. Does the scripture invest the people with the right of choosing their own ministers?*

*A.* This seems to be a natural right; it is therefore incumbent on those who would divest them of it, to prove that the scripture has plainly given them this authority. However, the right of the people to choose their ministers, is what the scripture very clearly vindicates.



Ministers are spoken of as the servants of the church, 2 Cor. iv. 5. Christians are exhorted not to believe every spirit, but to try the spirits whether they are of God, 1 John iv. 1. To beware of false prophets, Matt. xxiv. 24. And to take heed what they hear, Luke viii. 18. Which they cannot do, if they are bound to submit to those as their spiritual guides, whom other persons impose upon them.

When an Apostle was to be chosen in the room of Judas, the whole body of the Disciples was applied to on the occasion, Acts i. And even the seven Deacons were not chosen by the Apostles, but by the whole multitude, Acts vi.

Q. 107. *But cannot a Parish remove a Clergyman who shall prove grossly immoral, or ignorant?*

A. Not without citing him into the spiritual court; the proceedings of which are so slow, and so expensive, as to discourage persons, in common life, from lodging their complaints in them.

## SECTION VII.

### Concerning CHURCH-DISCIPLINE.

Q. 108. *WHAT do Dissenters object to the Discipline of the established church?*

A. They think it shamefully defective and corrupt.

Q. 109. *What qualifications does the church require of those that come to the Lord's table?*

A. No persons whatever are refused, who have been confirmed, and are not excommunicated, though they be guilty of gross immoralities; and numbers are permitted, yea obliged to receive the Lord's supper, merely as a qualification for a civil office.

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Q. 110.

*Q. 110. But may not the minister refuse the sacrament to those who are known to be persons of immoral characters?*

*A.* No; if he denies the sacrament to the most infamous sinner in his parish, he may appeal to the ecclesiastical court; and if he can secure the favour of the Chancellor, he may demand a place at the Lord's table, and defy the minister, and even the Bishop himself, to keep him from it.

*Q. 111. What would be the consequence if a minister, upon a principle of conscience, should persist in refusing the sacrament to an abandoned sinner, or as a qualification for a civil post?*

*A.* Though the rubric orders the Curate to "advertise any evil-liver that he presume not to come to the Lord's table," if he should refuse one that applied, he would be liable to suspension, and if he would not comply, to excommunication.

*Q. 112. But does the church suffer no notice to be taken of the immorality of its members?*

*A.* Yes; but neither the minister of the parish or any of the congregation, can exercise any sort of discipline; but their offences must be brought before the spiritual court, where Chancellors are the Judges, who are often *Laymen*, whose determinations will stand in law though contrary to the Bishop's.

*Q. 113. What are the crimes cognizable by the spiritual court?*

*A.* Fornication, simony, heresy, schism, slander, perjury, neglecting the sacraments, and the like.

*Q. 114. What are the punishments inflicted on persons found guilty of these crimes?*

*A.* Chiefly those of a mere carnal nature, which the gospel does not warrant; such as fines, imprisonment.

imprisonments, deprivation, and excommunication. Even this last, is more of a carnal than of a spiritual nature, and the effects of it are dreadful.

*Q. 115. What are the effects of excommunication?*

*A.* By the lesser excommunication a person is only disqualified for the sacraments, but by the greater he is excluded from attending the prayers of the church, and delivered over to the devil. He is also cut off from commerce with Christians in temporal affairs; and any one who converses with him, after being admonished to the contrary, is excommunicated himself. He cannot commence a suit at law, nor be a witness in any court, nor be an attorney for another. And if he obstinately persist forty days, the King's writ sends him to prison, where he must continue till he makes satisfaction to the church; and if he dies without having done it, he is denied christian burial.

*Q. 116. To what persons does the power of the spiritual court extend?*

*A.* Not merely to all those who profess to belong to the established church, (whether they receive the sacrament or not) but in some cases, to all kinds of persons who dissent from it, and is sometimes employed to excommunicate those from the church who never belonged to it.

*Q. 117. Does the church often proceed to severity with persons for the crimes above mentioned?*

*A.* Very seldom, unless they are persons of substance, who can stop the proceedings by a sum of money. And in order to extort large sums from such, causes in this court have often been very corruptly managed.

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Q. 118. *But since this is the Bishop's court, may not he interpose if he imagine any cause is corruptly managed?*

A. No, he cannot; the Chancellor is supreme and uncontrolled in his court, not liable to be restrained, or directed in his judicial proceedings, but finally and absolutely determines even in cases of excommunication. *Towgood*, p. 70.

Q. 119. *What kind of discipline does the church maintain with respect to her ministers?*

A. It is so lax as not to prevent the admission of unqualified ministers into the church, nor to eject them from it.

Q. 120. *What qualifications are required of Clergymen, in order to their getting ordination?*

A. They are required by the canons to pass an examination † by the Bishop, with respect to their learning, and to produce to him a recommendation from three Clergymen concerning their moral character. But it is well known, that it is no difficult matter for persons very poorly qualified, in both these respects, to get into orders, and even into good benefices.

† *Note.* The Bishops are prohibited ordaining any man "unless at the least he be able to yield an account of his faith, according to the 39 Articles, in *Latin*, and confirm the same by sufficient testimonies out of the holy scriptures." *Can. 35.* But their Lordships find it sometimes necessary to dispense with this; so little care being taken at our Universities, in the education of the Clergy, that many come for ordination who cannot pass such a test. Witness that well known lamentation of Bp. *Burnet* on this head: "Our *Ember-Weeks* (says he) are the grief and burden of my life. The much greater part of those who come to be ordained, are ignorant to a degree not to be apprehended by those who are not obliged to know it," &c. &c. *Burnet's Past. Care*, New Preface, p. 5. See also the Confessional, p. 347. 1st Edit.

Q. 121.



Q. 121. *But are ignorant and immoral ministers suffered to remain in the church?*

A. Though the canons relating to the character and conduct of the Clergy, are very strict and good \*, it is well known they are very little regarded: whilst those respecting mere *forms* and *ceremonies* are rigorously observed. The consequence of which is too well known †.

\* "No ecclesiastical person shall at any time—resort to any Taverns, or Alehouses—nor give themselves to—drinking or riot, spending their time idly by day or night, playing at dice, cards, or tables, or any other unlawful game; but—always endeavouring to profit the church of God, having always in mind that they ought to excel all others in purity of life, &c." *Can.* 65.

† N. B. It ought, however, to be acknowledged, and it is here acknowledged with pleasure, that many of the Clergy are persons of distinguished learning and exemplary piety. They will own, with grief, the truth of the above deplorable account.

Q. 122. *Are any Clergymen suffered to enjoy their benefices, who neglect the public duties of their office?*

A. Yes; many of them enjoy large emoluments, (holding several valuable livings, and other church preferments) who seldom or never preach \*, and do not reside within many miles of their parishes; but get poor Curates, for a very small sum, to do their work † for them.

\* This is more especially true of the *Bishops*, whose other engagements and superior dignity are thought to excuse them from *preaching*, excepting now and then on special occasions. Whereas the scripture represents preaching as the principal part of the episcopal office. See 1 Tim. iii. 2. 2 Tim. iv. 2. And the Apostles freed themselves from all secular cares that they might "give themselves continually to prayer and

the ministry of the word," Acts vi. 2—4. At the consecration of the Bishops, the Archbishop, giving them the Bible, exhorts them to be diligent in *teaching* and *feeding* the flock of Christ, &c. which they solemnly engage to be.

† See this very evil censured in the Priests of old. Ezek. xlv. 8. "Ye have not kept the charge of mine holy things, but ye have *set keepers* of my charge, [or *Curates*] in my sanctuary, for yourselves." See also Isa. lvi. 10, 11. and Jer. xxiii. 30.

Q. 123. *What do the members of the church think of the discipline of it?*

A. The sensible and candid of them are obliged to own that it is very corrupt; and the Liturgy itself teaches them once a year (viz. on *A/b-Wednesday*) to wish the godly discipline of the primitive church restored.

Q. 124. *Why then is it not restored?*

A. The plea always has been, that the times would not admit of it. But the truth of the case seems to be, the discipline of the church is so corrupt, that those who wish an amendment know not where to begin, and those whose province it is are too much interested in its present corrupt state to attempt it.

## SECTION VIII.

### INFERENCES *from the Whole.*

Q. 125. *WHAT inferences may be drawn from the foregoing account of the Church of England?*

A. 1. That the church of England is very imperfectly reformed from *Popery*, and still bears too strong a resemblance to the church of *Rome* \*.

See

\* See this in a striking manner illustrated in *Delaune's Plea for the Nonconformists*, p. 34—56.

The reflection of the Earl of *Chatham*, when the Clerical Petition was before the House, was not more severe than just. "We have a *Popish* Liturgy, *Calvinistical* articles, and "an *Arminian* Clergy."

2. That therefore it behoves those who have power in the church, to exert themselves in order to carry on the reformation; and endeavour to perfect what the first Reformers so nobly begun, with greater difficulty and hazard than their successors have in the present day any reason to fear; that so the church of England may truly and consistently call herself Protestant.

3. That while those on whom this work properly devolves, are determined to take no steps towards a further reform, but on the contrary endeavour to keep things as they are; it is the indispensable duty of those who are dissatisfied with them, and whose consciences would be uneasy with conformity, in a peaceable manner to dissent.

4. That the Dissenters ought to be exceedingly thankful to God for, and diligent to the utmost to *improve*, the liberty they enjoy, of separating from a national church, which they think so corrupt, and of worshipping God in places of their own, in a manner agreeable to the dictates of their consciences, and, as they think, to the rules of God's holy word; at the same time sympathizing with, and praying for, those of their Protestant-brethren abroad, who are deprived of this privilege.

5. That they should also be grateful to their civil governors, the king and those in authority  
under

under him, through whose clemency they enjoy privileges (though no other than their natural right) far superior to what their ancestors enjoyed in former reigns; and to testify their gratitude by approving themselves good subjects, endeavouring to promote the prosperity of their country, and preserve its peace, in every instance, that is consistent with a due regard to the liberty of the constitution.

6. That they ought to be stedfast in their adherence to the cause of Nonconformity, zealous in maintaining the great principles of it, and liberal and active to support and increase it, by all such methods as are consistent with peace, liberty, and charity; still making it to appear, that their zeal is principally directed to the cause of practical godliness, and the interest of Christ at large, even in that church from which they dissent.

They should love good men of every name, and rejoice wheresoever "Christ is preached, and God is worshipped in Spirit," though the mode be different from their own; making all proper allowances for the prejudices of education, which often have too great influence on the best of men. But a true catholic spirit does not require men to give up their own principles, or be indifferent to the support of them; nor ought we to conform to unscriptural modes, or submit to human impositions, merely because they are received by those whom we believe to be eminent for piety, or to hold the fundamental doctrines of the gospel.

If the principles of the dissent from the national church be of any importance, (and whether they be or not, let the foregoing pages determine) surely those Dissenters act a very  
incon-



inconsistent part, who are indifferent to them, and forget that their brave fore-fathers, whom they profess to venerate, left the national church not on account of *doctrines*, but those impositions on conscience which strike at the Head-ship of Jesus Christ, and which this church still continues to practise.

THE END.

*A LIST of BOOKS, relating to the Subject of this CATECHISM, and proper to be read after it, in order to a fuller Acquaintance with the History and the Principles of the Protestant Dissenters.*

1. **A** PLEA for the Nonconformists, by *Tho. De Laune*.
2. A Vindication of the Dissenters, by *James Pierce*, in answer to *Dr. W. Nichols*.
3. A Memorial of the Reformation, and of Britain's Deliverances from Popery and arbitrary Power, by *Benj. Bennet*.
4. The Dissenting Gentleman's Three Letters and P. S. in answer to *Mr. John White*. With a Letter to a Bishop, by *Mr. Towgood*.
5. A Review of the Case of Liturgies, in answer to *Mr. Bennet*, by *Benj. Robinson*.
6. An Abridgment of *Mr. Baxter's* Life and Times: With an Account of the ejected Ministers. By *Dr. Calamy*. 4 vols. 8vo.

The Substance of this Work is reprinted in 2 vols. with many Additions, under the Title of *the Nonconformists Memorial*, by *S. Palmer*, with 27 Heads of the most eminent Divines.

7. The History of the Puritans, from the Reformation, by *Daniel Neal*, M. A. 4 vols. 8vo. Also in 2 vols. 4to.
8. An Enquiry into the Principles of Toleration, by *Joseph Fownes*.
9. Letters to the Hon. Mr. Justice *Blackstone*, concerning his Exposition of the Act of Toleration, and some Positions relative to religious Liberty. By *P. Furneaux*, D. D.
10. *Dr. Wilton's* Review of the Articles.

*The following smaller Pieces are recommended as worthy to be patronized by Dissenters.*

A Sermon in Defence of their Principles, by *Mr. Josiah Townsend* of *Fairford*.—Another by *Mr. Beazely* of *Uxbridge*, preached at an Association.—

A third

A third by Mr. *Liddon of Hempsted*; the Preface to which deserves especial Notice.

The PROTESTANT DISSENTER'S MAGAZINE, published Monthly, Price 6d. is a seasonable Performance, which it is hoped Dissenters of all Parties will countenance.

BOOKS published by the Rev. Mr. PALMER, and sold by J. Johnson, T. Knott, and D. TAYLOR.

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2. The Protestant Dissenter's Answer to Dr. Priestley's Free Address on the Subject of the Lord's Supper. Price 1s. 6d.

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10. The Life of the Rev. I. Watts, D. D. by the late Dr. Samuel Johnson. With Notes, containing Animadversions and Additions, relating to Dr. Watts's Character, Writings, and Sentiments, particularly his last. Second Edition. Price 2s. 6d. To which is now added, an Appendix, (which may be had separate, Price 6d.) containing an authentic Account of the Doctor's Manuscripts, and Extracts from some of them in the Editor's Possession.

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